DOCTRINE OF Contentment

Briefly Explained, and practically Applied, in a TREATISE on 1 *Tim.* 6. 8.

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Heb. 13. 5.

Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

Aug. Confess. l. 3.

Omnis mihi copia, qua Deus meus non est, egestas est.

Seneca de Vita beata.

Beatus est præsentibus qualiacunque sunt contentus, amicisque rebus suis.

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UMI

HONORATISSIMO
DOMINO

Guliel. D. Gray

BARONI

de VVARK,

Φιλομαθεῖ καὶ πολυμαθεῖ,

Patrono ſuo longè Optimo

Gratitudinis & Obſervantiæ ergô

D. D. D. Q. L. M. Q.

HENRICUS WILKINSON.

TO THE READER.

HAving read in *Hiſtories*, *that the gates of* Mindus *were larger then the City*, *I purpoſe to avoid ſuch an* indecorum: *for I will not make a large porch to a ſmall building*, *nor premiſe a long Preface to a ſhort Treatiſe. Onely in brief I ſhall premiſe two Particulars.*

1. *That I am not ignorant that many have gone before me*, *and in elaborate volumes have treated on this ſubject of* Contentment: *I ſhall not be diſcouraged to follow after thoſe Authours* (*though I am ſenſible that I come ſhort of them*; *yet*) *I will caſt my mite into the Treaſury*, *hoping*

ping that a willing mind, and a real desire of doing good may obtain acceptance with God and men. Throughout the whole Discourse I have professedly insisted on a plain and perspicuous method. And although the Doctrine of Contentment is the Τὸ ὑποκείμενον *of this Tract, and of other Authours, both they and I concurring in the substantials thereof, yet as to the manner of handling of this Doctrine, I insist onely on my own method, neither do I plow with any other mans heifer; but what I treat on, hath cost me much pains in my retired meditations (though I am willing to learn of any.) What I here treat on I know experimentally to be true, and my desire and endeavour is to comfort others with these particular comforts, wherewith I my self have been comforted.*

2. *Concerning* the Doctrine of Contentment *which is here treated*

on,

on, it is a rare, excellent and profitable Leſſon, *which can be never enough taught, and never enough learned. The book of Nature cannot teach it exactly, we muſt therefore have recourſe unto the Book of Scripture, where onely it is exactly taught. Philoſophers are in the dark, and their lamps twinkle; we muſt go to ſchool to Chriſt, and to his Apoſtles, who teach us this great Leſſon. Contentment of ſpirit is not an herb which grows in our gardens: it is a plant of our heavenly Father's plantation, and it is onely watered by the influences of the Spirit of God. To make God* our portion, *as* David *did, and as the Church profeſſeth,* The Lord is my portion. *To learn (as* St Paul *did)* in every eſtate to be content: *To* caſt our care upon God who careth for us (*as* St Peter *exhorts,*) *This is the right and onely way to render our lives comfortable, and to make us*

Pſal. 119. 57. Lam. 3. 24. Phil. 4. 11. 1 Pet. 5. 7.

live a heaven upon earth. I will not (that I may keep my promiſe) detain thee Candid Reader, with a long preliminary diſcourſe. I heartily wiſh thy profitting by what thou readeſt: and if thou profit by reading of this Diſcourſe, (which my hearts deſire is that thou mayeſt) give God the glory and praiſe of all, and help him in thy prayers, who commends thee to Gods gracious providence, and is deſirous of the employment, to be,

Thy ſervant for Chriſts ſake,

Henry Wilkinſon.

From my Study in *Goffield* in *Eſſex*. *June* 6. 1671.

THE

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PAg. 36. lin. 19. *leg.* δυνάμεως & in marg. δυνάστευα. & in marg. p. 50. *l.* 2 Cor. 1. 20. p. 72. lin. 12. *l. brayd.* p. 80. marg. *l.* Act. 14. 22. p. 113. lin. 16. *l. expoſtulate.* p. 132. marg. *l. objicis periculis.* p. 134. lin. 18. *l. reſolution.* p. 141. marg. *l. ferjant.* p. 143. lin antepenult. *l. between them.*

1 Tim.

1 TIM. 6. 8.

And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.

CHAP. I.

Containing an Expoſition of the Context, the dividing and expounding of the words of the Text, and the deduction of a Doctrine, with the method of proſecution thereof.

SECT. I.

Containing an Expoſition of the Context.

THE Apoſtle St *Paul* writing to *Timothy*, and being endowed with a Spirit of infallibility, commands as a Father the Son, or rather as one θεόπνευστος καὶ θεοδίδακτος with all authority, v. 2. And as for ſuch who teach otherwiſe, the Apoſtle ſtamps a brand of infamy

Ταῦτα δίδασκε καὶ παρακάλει. *Perinde ergò eſt ac ſi dixiſſet, quotidie inculcandum eſſe hoc doctrinæ genus, nec docendos modò eſſe homines, ſed exhortationibus quoq; aſſiduis ſtimulandos, ac urgendos.* Calvin. in loc.

infamy upon them, v. 3, 4. *If any man teach otherwiſe and conſent not to wholeſom words, even the words of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and to the doctrine, which is according to godlineſs, He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about queſtions*, &c. There are two words which have a remark put upon them: One is τετύφωται, which is (as one obſerves) not onely to be ſwelled and puffed up, but to be made mad. Another word is νοσῶν ſick or diſeaſed, which (though it is commonly rendered doting about queſtions, yet) in the Original we find νοσῶν περὶ ζητήσεις ſick and diſeaſed about queſtions. It was originally the ſaying of *Melanchton*, (which ſince a learned Knight adopted and bequeathed to his tomb-ſtone) *Diſputandi pruritus eſt Religionis ſcabies.*

Τετύφωται à τυφόμαι non modò inflatum ſed dementatum ſignificat, Vict. Strig.

Sr *Henry Wotton* Provoſt of *Eaton* Colledge.

And what is the fruit of needleſs queſtions, and ſtrife of words, which the Apoſtle calls λογομαχίας? we read what comes of them, v. 4. *Envy, ſtrife, railing, evil ſurmiſes*, theſe are the bitter fruits which grow on ſuch trees. And further, v. 5. here followeth more of ſuch naughty fruit, even perverſe diſputings: The word is παραδιατριβαὶ: *Beza* tells us of an ancient Copy that reads διαπαρατριβαὶ (i. e.) *aſsidui attritus, mutuò enim ſe atterunt ſophiſtæ, & ſuâ ſcabie alios inficiunt.* But he owns the received verſion of

of the word, *Perversæ exercitationes*, and διατριβαὶ, which *Quintilian* calls *Scholarum exercitationes*.

Sunt veræ διατριβαὶ ad acuendum ingenium, conformandum judicium, veritatis denique investigationem comparatæ. Beza.

Beza highly commends them; so that scholastical disputations are not here condemned: they are very usefull, and serviceable in a learned Commonwealth. But what the Apostle reproves (as the word * παραδιατριβαὶ implies) are vain questions and needless contentions, and vain janglings. The meaning of the Apostle (as I conceive) is this, That all such disputes as tend to rubbing, galling, and vexing one another, in wrangling about trifles, and quarrelling about needless matters are here prohibited. The Apostle by way of character discovers who these wrangling Disputants are, v. 5. 1. *They are men of corrupt minds.* 2. *They are destitute of the Truth*; and they discover their erroneous corrupt judgement by this their rotten supposition, *Supposing that gain is godliness.* From these the Apostle chargeth us to *withdraw our selves.*

* *Significat Paulus istis inanibus quæstionibus homines quasi in quodam ludo impudentiæ & improbitatis exerceri*; Beza.

Διεφθαρμένων ἀνθρώπων τὸν νοῦν, *mentem habentium alienã à pietate, quod verè est* φθόρεσθαι. Grot. *in loc.*

Ἀφίστασο ἀπὸ τῶν τοιούτων.

Now the Apostle having reproved these false teachers and sceptical Philosophers, sets all our judgements right by acquainting us what is the true gain, v. 6. *But godliness with contentment is great gain.* But what is this Contentment mentioned? I answer the word signifies a self-sufficiency. God-

Μετ' αὐταρκείας.

lineſs is a ſufficient portion, and he that is contented with godlineſs is rich enough. God alone can perſwade the hearts of his children to be contented. God gives to all his children ſo much, as in his wiſdom he ſeeth to be ſufficient for them. He in an eſpecial manner gives his Children his grace to fear him, and contented ſpirits to ſubmit to him, and beleeving hearts to depend on him, and a ſanctified uſe of all the outward things they enjoy; hence they are exceeding gainers. It's *Calvin*'s obſervation, *That true happineſs conſiſts in godlineſs; for this ſufficiency is as it were an augmentation.* What's the reaſon or ſtrong argument which the Apoſtle urgeth to preſs this grand duty of Contentment? The Apoſtle tells us in v. 7, *For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.* The richeſt now alive neither brought gold, nor ſilver, nor mannours, nor fields into this world: neither can they carry them away with them, when they depart out of this world. We came naked into the World, and we ſhall return naked out of it, (as *Job* acknowledgeth) *Naked came I out of my mothers womb and naked ſhall I return thither.* We came all naked out of the womb of our mother that bare us, and we ſhall all return naked into the womb of our Mother Earth, whence we were took, and

Vera felicitas in pietate ſita eſt. Hac verò ſufficientia veluti quoddam auctarium eſt, Calv.

Job 1. 21.

and whereunto we shall be resolved. What's then the grand duty which concerns us all? The Text declares fully; Ἔχοντες δὲ, &c. *And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.* But if men will try conclusions of their own devised fancies, and will drown themselves in immoderate worldly cares, and intanglements; if they will make haste to be rich, and care not how they come by riches, *per fásque nefásque --- Quocunque modo rem*, let them read v. 9. *But they that will be rich fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtfull lusts, which drown men in destruction, and perdition.* Such as with an over-carking care and greediness pursue the Mammon of this world, and make it their confidence, they shall be sure to smart for their anxious sollicitude after the world, when they meet with losses, disappointments, and variety of vexations. The Apostle gives covetousness its right name and doom, v. 10. *For the love of money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

Bio vocabat φιλαργυρίαν κακίας μετρόπολιν; *dolor & cura videntur animum quodammodo perfodere; avaritiæ nimirum messis. Vid. Bez. in locum. Sententia fuit Timonis duo esse malorum elementa,* ἀπληστίαν καὶ φιλοδοξίαν. *Id.*

Sect. 2.

Wherein the words of the Text are expounded, and the Doctrine obſerved.

Sect. 2.

I Shall now reſume the words of the Text, and my endeavour ſhall be to keep cloſe unto them: Wherein are contained, 1. A great Duty, or an excellent leſſon of neceſſity to be learned by us all, and that's Contentment. 2. Here is ſet down the extent and latitude of this great Duty, wherein it muſt be exerciſed, and that is ſpecified in two particulars of vaſt comprehenſion: *viz.* In *food* and *raiment*.

Text divided.

Before I obſerve the doctrine obvious in the words, I ſhall premiſe a Paraphraſe of three ſignificant weighty words in the Text. One the Apoſtle calls διατροφὰς, a ſecond σκεπάσματα, a third ἀρκεσθησόμεθα. And after I have given the Expoſition of theſe words, what I ſhall further enlarge upon will be more perſpicuous in the enſuing diſcourſe.

1. Διατροφαὶ, wch ſignifieth neceſſary food, which may conduce to our nouriſhing. It's not ſaid Ἔχοντες τρυφὰς, (*i. e.*) delicate dainty food, but Ἔχοντες διατροφὰς, ſuch nouriſhing

Διατροφαὶ. *Cyprianus enarrans precationem Dominicam, vertit & exhibitionem, hoc eſt quod vocant præbendam, propiùs accedens ad ſenſum Pauli quàm qui vertit & alimenta.* Eraſm. *In eo locutionem juris ſecutus eſt Cyprianus, nam exhibere eſt alere.* Gro:.

nouriſhing food as ſerves for neceſſity and not for ſuperfluity. Here's implyed neceſſary, not ſuperfluous food; not ſuch luxurious high diet as may pamper the appetite, and miniſter fewel to noiſom luſts; but the food here mentioned conſiſts with ſuch a diet as is ſober, temperate, and conducing to the nouriſhment and preſervation, and not to the overthrow and deſtruction of the body.

Tanta edere decet quanta ad nutrimentum ſufficiunt, & non quanta ea ſunt, quæ delicias addunt. Oecumen.

A ſecond word is σκεπάσματα raiment, from σκεπάζω, and that from σκέπω to cover. It is not ſaid κοσμήματα ornaments, but σκεπάσματα raiments, coverings. Here's no mention made of gorgeous and coſtly attire, or embroidered rich garments, onely ſuch raiment as may cover our nakedneſs, and defend us from the cold. An Inſtance we have in our firſt Parents, Gen. 3. 21. *Unto Adam alſo and his wife did the Lord God make coats of ſkin and clothed them.* Let us hence be inſtructed to reflect upon our original; No ſhame for nakedneſs, till ſin was committed; Sin brought ſhame: Innocency was a better clothing then cloth of Tiſſue, or any other coſtly gar-

2 Σκεπάσματα. Σκέπω *Ariſtides poſuit pro tecto, Philo autem ut hîc Paulus pro veſte & tecto. Eſt enim σκέπη ſive σκέπασμα hoc omne quo tegimur.* Grot.

Tanta ac talia induere decet, quantis nuditas ipſa protegatur, & non quæcunque delicias gignunt, & mollitiem iis, quæ ea ferunt. Oecumen. in loc.

ment invented by after generations. Though Persons of Quality may wear finer garments (so they be decent and modest) then inferiour persons, (for I know of no Scripture warrant to level the Noble-man with the Peasant) yet it's every ones duty according to his condition to be contented with such apparel as is necessary to cover nakedness, and keep off cold. He that is of a lower degree must not envy him that is of a higher degree. The Countrey mans Leather or Russet may keep him as warm as the Noble-mans Velvet or Scarlet. *Calvin* on the place (as he frequently doth) gives a choice observation upon the words. *In that* (saith he) *the Apostle maketh mention of food and raiment, he excludes delights, and an abundant plenty: For nature is content with a little; and that's superfluous, which goeth beyond a natural use; not that a more liberal use is to be condemned, but a vicious appetite is always to be condemned.* By food and raiment all things necessary are comprehended; and other things which are necessary, are reduced unto these two things, food and raiment.

Quum alimenta & tegmina nominat, delicias & abundantem copiam excludit. Natura enim parvo contenta est: superfluum autem, quicquid exuperat naturalem usum. Non quòd liberalior usus per se damnari debeat, sed appetitus semper vitiosus est. Calv. *Paulus ea solùm nominavit quæ omnibus in universum hominibus necessaria sunt; idq; simpliciter, & non ad certos fines duntaxat, & sub quibus cætera ferè possunt comprehendi.* Estius.

3. Ἀχεσθησόμεθα.

A third word is Ἀρχεσθησόμεθα, which word

word though it be of the future tense, yet (as the Hebrew phrase is usual) it evidently denotes the force of an Imperative signification, as those commands do, *Thou shalt not kill*, *Thou shalt not commit adultery*, &c. *Estius* propounds the question whether this be a counsel or a command, and he determines, *That it's a command appertaining to all as proceeding from the law of nature; for to seek superfluities is against nature; and if it be not lawfull to beg of God superfluities, therefore not to seek them.* Beza renders the word τούτοις ἀρχεσθησόμεθα, *Hæc tibi satis erunt*, These things will be sufficient for us. *Junius* renders the words *Propter hoc nobis sufficit alimentum & operimentum.* If we have to nourish and cover us, we have sufficiency, and have cause enough to be content. *And* (as *Chrysostom* observes on the place) *We ought to eat such things as are sufficient for nourishment for the quantity and quality, and we ought to be clothed with such garments as will cover nakedness, and nothing ought to be superfluous.* It's the observation of Reverend *Perkins* on the words, *That it's not said cates nor delicate food, but food that may feed; It's not said*

Præceptum est, idémque ad omnes pertinens, atq; adeò ex ipsa naturæ lege profectum. Nam superflua quærere contra naturam est, & si petere superflua à Deo non licet, ergò nec quærere. Estius.

Beza in loc.

Junius in loc.

Τοσαῦτα ἐσθίειν χρὴ καὶ τοιαῦτα, ἃ θρέψαι ἀρκεῖ, τοιαῦτα ἀμφιέννυσθαι ἃ σκεπάσαι μόνον ἡμᾶς ὀφείλει καὶ προστεῖλαι τὴν γύμνωσιν, μηδὲν πρόστον. Chrysostom.

Mr Perkins in loc.

ſaid ornaments or habiliments, but covering garments, ſo much as may defend us from the cold. Hence a Lexicographer and Critick in ſeveral languages derives *Garment quaſi Guardment*, implying that our clothes ſhould be for a ſafeguard from the cold, and not for vanity and ſuperfluity. Hence hath place that of the Poet:

Minſhaw's Diction.

Horat. Serm.

——*Toga quæ defendere frigus*
Quamvis craſſa queat.

Bona ſunt propter neceſſitatem, quibus indiget homo propter interiora conſumentia, & hæc ſunt alimenta, vel contra exteriora corrumpentia, & ſic indiget homo tegumentis veſtium & domorum. Aquinas in locum.

Aquinas expounds the Text concerning thoſe good things which are for neceſſity, ſuch as we ſtand in need of. So then let us conſider what a great mercy it is to have ſufficient food and raiment for us and ours: let us therefore account what we have ſufficient, and give God thanks for what we have, eſteeming what God gives us to be enough and ſufficient for us.

The words thus divided and expounded contain this obvious Doctrine to be reduced unto our daily practiſe, *viz.*

Doctr. *That it's our obliged duty, which concerns us all, to labour after a Contented mind, and to acquieſce, and reſt ſatisfied with the preſent condition and ſtation wherein God is pleaſed to ſet us in the preſent World.*

In

In the prosecution of this practical Assertion (which is the Ground-work of the ensuing Treatise) I shall confine my self to a plain and perspicuous Method, 1. To discover wherein Contentedness consists. 2. To illustrate the point by choice examples. 3. To quote Scripture Precepts injoyning, and commanding obedience to the duty. 4. I shall endeavour to confirm the Doctrine by demonstrative Arguments. 5. I shall conclude with a practical Application and particular reflection upon our selves, hoping and desiring (through Christ that strengthneth me) to prevail with the Reader, to learn this Excellent lesson of Contentedness, and reduce it into daily practise throughout his whole life and conversation. Method propounded.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Shewing wherein Contentedneſs conſiſts in five diſtinguiſhing Characters.

Sect. 1.

Containing three Characters of Contentedneſs.

1 Wherein Contentedneſs conſiſts, inſtances are given in 5 ſeveral Characters.

IN purſuance of my Method propounded, my work lyeth before me in the firſt place to diſcover wherein contentedneſs conſiſts: and this I ſhall repreſent in theſe five diſtinguiſhing Characters. 1. *A contented perſon makes it his buſineſs to bring his mind ſuitable to his means.* 2. *He is a perſon thankfull for any thing, and every thing that he hath.* 3. *He ſtrives and endeavours againſt coveting thoſe things, which are not his own.* 4. *He enjoyeth himſelf cheerfully and goeth on contentedly and quietly in the management of the works of his calling.* 5. *Above all he labours to make God his portion*: for he alone can perſwade the heart of any one to reſt content and be ſatisfied. I ſhall reſume the enlargement of theſe particulars, and proſecute them in their order.

1. *A Contented person makes it his busi-neſs to bring his mind ſuitable to his means:* Although his outward condition in the world may be very low, yet an inward frame of heart raiſeth the condition higher: for whoſoever though in a mean condition endeavours to get a compoſed and ſedate frame of ſpirit, he is rich enough, becauſe he hath brought his mind up to his means; and hereupon his ſpirit is quieted and ſetled. It's the diſcontented ſpirit of a man, that cauſeth him to eſteem a great eſtate but mean, becauſe his deſire is inſatiate and unlimited: whereas a contented perſon is endowed with ſuch an excellent temper, that he eſteems a mean eſtate great, becauſe his mind is quieted, his affections are regulated, and his heart acquieſceth in the divine diſpenſations; ſo that riches, honours, pleaſures, all are the portion of a contented man: becauſe a contented man enjoys a ſacred communion with God, and he finds all in the Fountain which was wanting in the Ciſterns, and in the deficiency of all Creatures, he finds all made up in the All-ſufficiency of God. Though ſuch a man may want, according to the worlds verdict, many outward accommodations, yet in his own judgement he poſſeſſeth them, or elſe what is better, and more worth then them all: for his heart reſts contented, and is abun-

Character 1. A contented perſon makes it his buſineſs to bring his mind to his means. *Latus in præſens animus quod ultra eſt, oderis curare.* Hor. Lib. 2. Carm. 16.

abundantly satisfied with the good pleasure of God. This man makes God his portion and therefore hath all, as a Father saith, *He hath all things, who hath him that possesseth all things.* Of this choice temper of spirit was *David*, Psalm 16. 5, 6. *The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup. Thou maintainest my lot, the lines are fallen to me in a pleasant place, yea I have a goodly heritage.* Upon this place it's observed, *That those are rightly instructed in true godliness who are satisfied with God alone, and are so contented with him, as to desire nothing without him.* This is the first Character of a contented person whose mind and means concur in a mutual harmony and correspondence.

Habet omnia, qui habet possidentem omnia. Aug.

Docet hic locus eos demum ritè in vera pietate edoctos esse quibus unus Deus sufficit: Nam David partem sortis suæ & hæreditatem vocando, & calicem; se eo uno ità contentum affirmat ut nihil appetat extra ipsum; nec pravis desideriis titillatur. Calv. in loc.

Character 2. A contented person is thankfull for what he hath.

A second Character of a contented person *is to be thankfull for all that he hath:* Though he seeth that many others have a larger share of outward things then he hath, yet he is so far from murmuring against God, and envying of men, that he is thankfull for that little which he enjoys, and for it he returns unto God the Tribute of a thankfull heart. A contented person is such an one, in whom godliness and contentment meet, (for none but godly men can truly be

be contented men.) He (I ſay) conſiders that whatever he poſſeſſeth is the liberal allowance of God, and that all his days he lives upon Gods alms, and is maintain'd by him, and if he enjoy a more large and plentifull eſtate, he receives all from the ſole Bounty and Largeſs of God, and if he poſſeſs a meaner eſtate yet he hath more then he deſerves; for (as a Reverend and godly Divine uſed to ſay) *If we have leſs then Hell it's more then we deſerve.* Upon ſuch deliberate thoughts we come to learn this excellent leſſon of Contentment; wherefore this is a ſignal teſtimony of Contentment, when we are ſo far from being diſcontented for what we want, as our mouthes are filled with the praiſes of the Lord, & our hearts are enlarged with thankfulneſs for the preſent mercies which we enjoy: for he that is the moſt thankfull perſon is the moſt contented perſon. *Job* was thankfull as well for adverſity as for proſperity. Job 1. 21. *The Lord* (ſaith he) *hath given and the Lord hath taken away, bleſſed be the name of the Lord.* He well knew that the ſame wiſe God who gave him an eſtate could in wiſdom take it away, and reſtore it double (as it came to paſs) in his own appointed time. Of the ſame reſolved ſpirit was *David,* who had a fixed and contented ſpirit as well in adverſity as in proſperity: as will evidently be

Mr *Iohn Dod* who wrote on the Commandments and Lords prayer, &c.

be evinced by comparing *Psalm* 57. with *Psalm* 108. when he made this latter Psalm he was in prosperity and exuberant in praises. v. 1,2,3. *O God my heart is fixed. I will sing and give praise even with my glory. Awake psaltery and harp, I my self will awake early. I will praise thee O Lord among the people, and I will sing praises to thee among the nations.* But when *David* penn'd Psal. 57. he was in a great affliction (as the Title specifieth) *when he fled from Saul in the cave*; and he complains v. 4. *My soul is among lions:* yet at that time of his distress, he discovered an excellent frame of spirit, such an one as was fixed and resolved, both contented and quieted. v. 7. *My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed, I will sing and give praise.*

Character 3. A contented person strives against coveting those things, which are not his own.

A third Character of a Contented person is this, *That he strives and endeavours against coveting those things that are not his own.* The tenth Commandment forbids coveting, *Exod.* 20. 17. This express letter of the Law St *Paul* carryed in his serious thoughts, and therefore he sets it as a Frontlet before his eyes, *Rom.* 13. 9. *Thou shalt not covet.* Now according to the strict letter of the Law, the conscience of the Apostle clears him from all false accusations, Acts 20. 33. *I have coveted no mans silver, or gold, or apparel. Abraham* was of a contented

tented spirit, God did bless him with a great substance, he was exceeding rich; yet (though usually they who have a great deal would willingly have more) he desired not in the least any augmentation unto his estate by the King of *Sodom*. *Abraham* might very fairly with justice and equity have detained and reserved for his own use the goods of the King of *Sodom*, and he might have made a legal challenge of them by a double right and title. For first the goods were Abrahams *jure belli*, because he had won the field, and got those goods by conquest. 2. Those goods were Abrahams *jure donationis*, by the King of *Sodom's* free donation, Gen. 14. 21. *And the King of Sodom said unto Abraham, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thy self.* However *Abraham* would rather *cedere de suo jure*, then be made richer by the King of *Sodom*.

Τὰ κτὶ πόλεμον κρατούμενα τῶν κρατούντων εἶναι. *Arist. 1 Polit.*

But it will be objected, that if we may not desire that which is anothers, there can be no trading, nor merchandise, nor improvement of estates, nor good husbandry in the world: How can we then live in the world? *Object.*

To give in an Answer to this Objection, I shall first shew negatively, how it is no way lawfull to desire that which is anothers: and secondly, I shall shew positively, *Answ.*

how, and in what ſenſe it is lawfull to deſire another mans eſtate.

1. Negatively. In what caſes we may not deſire another mans eſtate.

1. Negatively, In ſuch caſes as theſe to be mentioned, it is not lawfull to deſire another mans eſtate. As for inſtance,

1. A man may not deſire another mans eſtate againſt the right owners conſent.

1. *It is not lawful to deſire and covet an eſtate againſt the owners will and conſent.* For though the buyer would willingly give a valuable price, yet he muſt not importune, force and neceſſitate the owner to part with his Inheritance againſt his will, much leſs uſe any indirect ways to circumvent, and go beyond the owner, to defraud him of his eſtate by any forged cavillations. When a man is reſolved to get another mans eſtate, and will take no denial, and notwithſtanding the owners diſſent and reluctancy, yet he will purſue his indefatigable endeavours to compaſs it, this man without all queſtion is a male-contented ſpirited perſon.

To produce an Inſtance notoriouſly known; *Ahab*'s heart was ſet upon *Naboth*'s vineyard, he tendred very fair propoſals, either to give the price in money to the full value, or elſe by way of exchange to give another and a better vineyard. The vineyard of *Naboth* was near to the palace of *Samaria*, conveniently ſituated for *Ahab*'s accommodation, it lay near his Demeſnes:

Naboth

Naboth gave a flat and rational denial, 1 *Kings*, 21. 3. *And Naboth ſaid unto Ahab, The Lord forbid it me that I ſhould give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.* Upon this anſwer *Ahab* took pet, refuſed his meat, laid him down upon his bed heavy and diſpleaſed, *v.* 4. Thus this diſcontented man was ſullen, and vext himſelf, becauſe he could not poſſeſs that which was not his own: his deſire was inordinate and his ſpirit reſtleſs, ſo that he could not enjoy himſelf in any thing elſe, becauſe his greedy deſire was not ſatisfied in that particular concerning *Naboth*'s vineyard. Now let us take notice of the dreadful effects and conſequences of this diſcontented ſpirit. Upon this curſed root grew ſuch fruit as was more bitter then gall and wormwood. For firſt, to compaſs *Naboth*'s vineyard, *Ahab* gave himſelf up to the wicked counſels of his wife *Jezabel*, one who is ſtigmatized for the vileſt of women, for *whoredoms and witchcrafts*. 2 Kings 9. 22.

2. Hence followeth falſe-witneſs-bearing and falſe accuſations againſt the ninth commandment. *Jezabel* wrote in the Kings name, and ſealed the letter with the Kings ſignet. Religion was pretended, though nothing but murder was intended. *Naboth* was accuſed of blaſphemy, and two ſons of *Belial* were ſuborned to give teſtimony to a falſe accuſation. Then thirdly followeth 1 Kings 21. 13.

murder, a palpable breach of the sixth Commandment, *Naboth* was stoned to death. And fourthly, after the murder committed upon the person of *Naboth*, *Ahab* came and took possession of his vineyard; This was evident theft, a breach of the eighth Commandment. Thus we see the gradations of sin; covetousness and discontent brought forth forgery and false accusations; forgery and false accusations brought forth murder, and murder brought forth theft & robbery. The source and orignal of all was a covetous spirit, a greedy desire in *Ahab* to get that wch was not his own; and this desire is unlawful. For any great man to impale the poor mans acre in his Park, and to inclose the poor mans Cottage in a great mans Palace against the poor mans consent, is absolutely unlawful both by the Law of God and man.

2. It is not lawfull to desire another mans estate, nor to improve our own by any unjust and indirect means.

2. As it is not lawful to desire another mans estate, and to endeavour to get it any indirect, unjust, or false way; *So neither is it lawful to improve a mans own estate by fraud and falshood, cousenage and oppression.* It's commonly said that every man may make the best of his own, but that saying must be limited to just and honest means. But multitudes there are who make themselves rich by rapine, oppression and violence: and many there are who offend in an high measure, by cavilling in needless matters, who by

by forged cavillations, Jeſuitical colluſions and equivocations, and by variety of tricks and wit, ſeek to diſpoſſeſs the right owners out of their own inheritance. And others there are as bad as they, who to make more room for themſelves, and to maintain their own Grandeur, defraud many poor by Monopolies, Incloſures and depopulations. Many there are who rejoyce to build their own foundation upon the ruines of other men, and to rear up a ſtately Fabrick upon that place, where many houſes have been pull'd down, and many families have been deſtroyed. What do theſe deſign, and what other effects do follow, but a *Babel* of confuſion, and a ready way to ruine themſelves and their poſterity? Many ſo build houſes (ſuch I mean as get eſtates by rapine and violence) as if their very ſtately houſes ſhould be places of their ſepulchres. Thoſe Scriptures are well known, (Oh! that they were as well laid to heart) One is *Jer.* 17. 11. *As the Partridge ſitteth on eggs and hatcheth them not, ſo he that getteth riches, and not by right, ſhall leave them in the midſt of his days, and at his end ſhall be a fool.* Another is *Habak.* 2. 9, 10, 11. *Wo unto him that coveteth an evil coveting to his houſe, that he may ſet his neſt on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil. Thou haſt conſulted ſhame to thy houſe by cutting off many*

people, and hast sinned against thy soul. For the stone shall cry out of the wall, & the beam of the timber shall answer. Many Histories are upon Record for terrour and caution. One onely I shall mention of *Will. Rufus* recorded by many writers of our English Chronicles, which a great Scholar a late B. of *Worcester* takes special notice of, and in two verses describes the sad consequences thereof. The story in brief is this. *William* the Conquerour demolished four Abbeys and thirty six Parish Churches in *Hantshire*, and turned out the Inhabitants for thirty miles compass, to make a Forest for wild beasts, (which Forest to this day is called New Forest.) His son *William Rufus* was hunting in that Forest, and was slain there by the glancing of an Arrow.

Rex cervũ insequitur, Regem vindicta, Tyrellus *Non bene prævisum transfixit acumine ferri,* v. Prid. Hist. V. *Cambden* on *Hantshire.*

But in the second place as I have shewed negatively in two particulars wherein a man may not desire another mans estate: so I will shew in two other particulars, how a man may desire another mans estate, and may improve what he hath of his own.

2 Positively, in what case we may desire that which is anothers. 1 In merchandise, a man may exchange one thing for another.

1. *In merchandise, in buying and selling, a man for his money, may with moderation and equity, desire and seek after that which is another mans.* He may in the shambles buy meat, and in the shops buy cloth, giving a valuable consideration for them, always provided that in equity and good conscience the price ought to be worth the commodity,

dity, and the commodity ought to be worth the price. *Caveat emptor* (though it is a common saying, yet) will not excuse any seller, who knowingly goeth beyond his Brother. Merchandizing and buying and selling, trading and trafficking, commuting one thing for another by mutual consent of the buyer and seller are not onely lawful but commendable. *Abraham* communed with *Ephron* the *Hittite* about the cave of *Machpelah* for a burying place. *Ephron* would have given it him, but *Abraham* would not take it upon gift; wherefore *Ephron* told him the value of the land to be worth four hundred shekels of silver, *Gen.* 23. 15. *Abraham* paid that sum, *v.* 16. He did not dodge or cheapen the Market, much less force any abatement, but comes up to *Ephron*'s price. In this case a man may desire what's not his own at present, but what's yet remaining in another mans possession, both parties being agreed, one to buy, and the other to sell.

2. *It's both lawful and necessary for any man to make a good improvement of what he possesseth of his own.* And though probably at present some profits arising and accruing out of his estate are not yet visible to him, yet he ought by good husbandry and a frugal management of his estate to make it better, and what yet he hath not, to make

2. A man may improve in good ways his own estate.

his own (as far as equity permits) by induſtry and diligence. Thus *Solomon* ſaith, *The hand of the diligent maketh rich.* *The ſubſtance of a diligent man is precious.* *The ſoul of the diligent ſhall be made fat.* *The hand of the diligent ſhall bear rule.* *The thoughts of the diligent tend to plenteouſneſs*, Prov. 21. 5. Such as are diligent are preferred to high honour and dignity, *Prov.* 22. 29. *Seeſt thou a man diligent in his buſineſs? He ſhall ſtand before Kings, he ſhall not ſtand before mean men.* Wherefore diligence and induſtry, a provident and frugal care in the diſcharge of the duties of our calling are not onely ſeaſonable, but neceſſarily requiſite. Every perſon ought to be induſtrious in his calling. None ought to eat the bread of idleneſs. Drones and Loiterers are not to be permitted to be in a hive. It is the *Labourer* and not the Loiterer *that is worthy of his hire.* And in an eſpecial manner it is a Chriſtian duty incumbent on Maſters of Families to provide for their houſhold, as the Apoſtle ſaith, 1 Tim. 5. 8. *But if any man provide not for his own, and eſpecially for thoſe of his own houſe, he hath denied the faith, and is worſe then an infidel.* So then contentedneſs doth not in the leaſt debarr and put by honeſt labours, and an induſtrious care in a mans calling. But contentedneſs moderates, directs and limits our care and induſtry, that whatever labour we undertake,

Prov. 10. 4. Prov. 12. 27. Prov. 13. 4. Prov. 12. 24.

undertake, be not inordinate and immoderate, and may not exceed the bounds of a just and due proportion. But the inlargement of this Particular will more properly fall into the next Section.

Sect. 2.

Sect. 2.

Containing a fourth and fifth Character of Contentedness.

I Proceed to a fourth Character of a Contented mind, and that is *to engage a man to go on cheerfully in the discharge of the works of his calling.* *Character 4.* A contented man goes on cheerfully in the works of his calling.

There's a twofold calling (which every man either hath or ought to have) One is a General Calling as a Christian: The other is a Particular Calling as relating to the secular affairs of this present world, as Merchandizing, *&c.* husbandry or shepherdry

1. *For a General Calling.* How can a man go on cheerfully in the performance of religious duties, unless his heart be quieted, composed and settled? Vexatious discontented thoughts, worldly intanglements and a hurry of earthly incumbrances will follow men into their closets, and distract them, even when they are upon their knees a praying. When discontented and tumultuous thoughts lie near the heart they will follow men into a publick Congregation, 1. A contented man goes on cheerfully in the works of his general calling.

so

so that though their bodies be in the Church, yet their hearts run after their covetousness. Further, discontent will follow a Preacher unto his pulpit, and there distract and divert his thoughts and most serious meditations: but when mens thoughts are sedate and fixed, Oh! how much profit do they reap by the word preach'd and the word read? how fervently do they pray! and how much are their affections rais'd in meditation! and how powerfully and affectionately doth a Preacher deliver the word of God, when the inward frame of his spirit is well ordered and composed. We read that the blind man in the Gospel threw away his coat when he heard that Christ was coming by that way; so must we (especially when we are about religious duties) cast out of our thoughts the lumber of the world, and throw away earthly intanglements; that so we may go on cheerfully in the performance of every duty. But variety of discontented perplexing thoughts and carking vexatious cares, are like plummets of lead to depress and bow down the spirit: whereas a quiet and contented spirit drives on with such expedition in every duty as did *the chariots of Amminadab*, Cant. 6. 2.

2 A contented man goes on cheer-

2. As a Contented spirited man goeth on cheerfully (as a good Christian ought to do) in the works of his general Calling,

as

as in praying, hearing, reading, meditating, so in the works of *his particular calling* he goeth on with alacrity of spirit. For instance, one is a Minister, another is a Physician, a third a Lawyer, a fourth a Merchant, and variety of persons (as their mind leads them) take upon them variety of callings; whosoever then he be that hath learned this divine art of Contentment, he manageth the works of his particular calling with much alacrity of spirit; he labours to improve his present calling to his best advantage, and he seeks not great things for himself: he looks upon his present portion (though meaner then many others have) as Gods liberal allowance. Though he enjoys but one talent (whil'st others have many yet,) he looks upon himself as obliged to make a diligent improvement of that one talent, having in his eye that promise, *Matth.* 25. 21. *His Lord said unto him who with five talents had gained five more --- Well done thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.* Thus then it evidently appears, that to be diligent and industrious in the present station and calling wherein God hath set us, and to be cheerful in our employment plainly evidenceth a contented mind.

fully in the works of his particular calling.

Fifthly,

Character 5. A contented person makes God his portion.

Fifthly, (and the last Character but chiefest of all I have named) is this, *viz. That man is contented who makes God his portion.* God onely can perswade the heart, and prevail with it, to rest satisfied and abundantly contented with himself. Wherefore the Apostle saith, *Godliness with contentment is great gain.* The word signifies self-sufficiency: this God onely can give; and godliness alone as derived from God can bring contentment; and he is a rich man indeed, who is content with Godliness. It is an excellent observation of *Calvin, That God is always present with his people, and he gives to every one of them that portion that may suffice for their necessity.* Whoever therefore makes God his portion and treasure, his honour and refuge, his shield and buckler; he hath the greatest cause to be content, for he hath all in God. *Esau* said to *Jacob, I have enough, Gen. 33. 9.* But *Jacob* said, I have all, for of all, seeing God gave him his grace: For grace is more worth then a whole world: besides *Jacob* had interest in the Covenant of grace, and having God his portion he had all, *David* profess'd

1 Tim. 6. 6. Μετ' αὐταρκείας. *Quies animæ est nihil appetere.* Lud. de Dieu. *Pietas cum animo sorte suâ contento.* Beza. *Est sufficientia quâ quis suâ sorte est contentus,* &c. C. à Lapide.

Semper adest suis Dominus, & quantum illorum necessitati sufficit ex sua plenitudine suum cuique demensum erogat. Calv. in loc.

Ex benignitate Dei omnia mihi abundè suppetunt. Paulus Fagius.

profeſs'd that the Lord was the portion of his inheritance. *Pſal.* 16. 5. *The Lord is the portion of my inheritance, and of my cup: thou maintaineſt my lot.* So *Pſalm* 119. 57. he again profeſſeth, *Thou art my portion, O Lord:* ſo likewiſe the Church profeſſeth, *Lam.* 3. 24. *The Lord is my portion ſaith my ſoul, therefore will I hope in him.* If then we deſire reſt and quietneſs, all our hopes, love, joy and deſire muſt centre upon God. The dove could find no reſt for the ſole of her foot till *Noah* took her into the ark. There can be no reſt nor acquieſcence for any Chriſtian, but in God. It's frequently obſerved by learned men that all the letters in Jehovah are quieſcent, to imply unto us that there is no reſt to be had but in God alone. Doſt thou Oh Chriſtian! deſire treaſures? they are to be had in Chriſt. *Col.* 2. 3. *In whom are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge.* Doſt thou deſire honours, they are to be had in Chriſt; for he is ſaid to be נשיא in the abſtract, and he puts a great honour upon all his Saints, as we may ſee 1 *Pet.* 2. 9. *But ye are a choſen generation, a royal prieſthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people.* Gods children are Kings

Benigne largitus eſt mihi Deus, quamplurima & omnia mihi ſuppetunt, & nullâ re indigeo. Vatablus.

Amor eſt pondus animi, quocunque fertur. & amore fertur anima in Deum tanquam in centrum aternæ quietis. Aug. de Civit. Dei, lib. 1. cap. 13.

1 Pet. 2. 7.

Rev. 1. 5.

Col. 3. 11. Kings and Priests unto God. *Christ* (saith the Apostle) *is all and in all.* Augustine hath a memorable saying, *viz. Christ alone will be to thee all, for in that one good are contained all.* And in that rare book of his Confessions, amongst many choice sayings he propounds from his own experience this excellent one; viz. *All my plenty, if God be not there is poverty.* Here then is evidenced, wherein consists the experimental knowledge of Contentment. That man questionless hath not onely the Theory, but the Practice of Contentment, who accounts God his riches, honours, pleasures, profits, refuge and all. While the Epicure continues swallowing, and the covetous is scraping, and the ambitious continues climbing, and the voluptuous man with all eagerness pursues his vain delights and pleasures, a true beleever makes his address and application unto God. He finds and tasts riches, pleasures, delights, and all comforts whatsoever concentred in his God. His God is all and above all, and the light of his countenance he prefers before all the treasures in the universe. This is that grand request that *David* prefers to the throne of grace, Psalm 4. 6, *There are many that say, who will shew us any good? Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.* The multitude in general ask after that which is good:

Ipse unus Christus erit tibi omnia, quia in ipso uno bono, bona sunt omnia. Aug.

Omnis mihi copia, quæ Deus meus non est, egestas est. Aug. Confes. lib. 3.

good: for good in general is the object of the will (as the Philosopher observes.) But there are variety of mistakes, and many mistake that for good which is not. Wherefore the Psalmist determines wherein saving good, real and solid consists, viz. *In the light of Gods gracious countenance.* *Moses* the man of God prays, *O satisfie us early with thy mercy, that we may rejoyce and be glad all our days.* Such an one who hath these desires in sincerity and truth is the truly contented man.

Ἀγαθὸν ὅστιν οὗ πάντες ἐφίενται. *Arist. Rhet.*

Psal. 90. 14.

CHAP. III.

Wherein the Doctrine is illustrated by several examples, and proved by Scripture.

Chap. 3. Containing an illustration of the doctrine by Examples.

SECT. I.

Wherein the Doctrine is illustrated by Examples.

2. IN the second place I shall illustrate the truth of the doctrine by Examples. I shall make mention of four Scripture Examples as choice patterns for our imitation.

2 *Head.* Wherein the doctrine is illustrated by Examples.

The first Example of Contentment I shall instance in, is *Abraham*. I before mentioned

1. Example of *Abraham*.

tioned his Contentedneſs in refuſing the goods of the King of *Sodom*. What I ſhall now take ſpecial notice of, ſhall be concerning his Contentedneſs in managing and ending the controverſie between his herdſmen and *Lots* herdſmen. Firſt, *Abraham* perſwades to peace and amicable agreement, *Gen.* 13. 8. *And Abraham ſaid unto Lot, Let there be no ſtrife I pray thee, between thee and me, and between thy herd-men and my herd-men, for we are brethren.* Secondly, *Abraham* (though the uncle and ſuperiour) offers to *Lot*, though his nephew and inferiour, the choice of what place he would go to, v. 9. *Is not the whole land before thee, ſeparate thy ſelf I pray thee from me, if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right, or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.* And *Lot* accordingly took his choice, v. 11. *Then Lot choſe him all the plain of Jordan.* Thus *Abraham* diſcovered ſignal and exemplary humility in yielding to his nephew *Lot* the choice of a place, and as ſignal and excellent contentedneſs of ſpirit in taking *Lots* leavings.

2 Example of *Jacob.* A ſecond Example I ſhall inſtance in, is of *Jacob*, *Abraham*'s grand-child, who trode exactly in his grandfathers ſteps. *Jacob* was conſtrain'd to flie for his life, and to be an exile from his fathers family, that ſo he

might

might escape the murder design'd by his incensed brother *Esau*. He came the first night of his travels to *Bethel*, and what lodging he had there, is upon record. He had no other canopy then the *Expansum of the heavens*, and no other pillow but hard stones; yet there where he lay *subdiò*, exposed to wind and weather, God graciously appeared in a dream unto him, and renewed his covenant made with *Abraham* and *Isaac*; and likewise promised great blessings to him and his seed: and in the mean time God promised his special presence to *Jacob* both in going and returning. After such mercies promised, *Jacob* made a solemn vow, *Gen.* 28. 20, 21. *And Jacob vowed a vow saying, If the Lord will be with me, and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my fathers house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God.* It is worth our observation that *Jacob* capitulates not for high diet, nor costly raiment (for beggers must not be choosers) but he onely desires what is necessary for food and raiment. *Pererius* upon the place gives his verdict, (whereunto many wise men will give their assent) *That a middle estate is to be most desired*, and he gives a strong reason, *Because a middle condition drives*

Gen. 28. 11.

Gen. 28. 13, 14, 15.

Media vita humana conditio, & facultatum mediocritas optanda maximè est hominibus, &c. Quippe quòd arcet flagitia, vitiumque reddit frugalem & quietam & jucundam. Pererius in Gen. 28. 20.

away vices and renders the life frugal, and quiet and pleasant. The said learned Authour quotes an obscure saying of an ancient Poet, and refers himself to *Plato's* interpretation thereof. The saying at first hearing seems a riddle or paradox, viz. *The half is more worth then the whole. Totum accipere* (as *Plato* observes) *noxium est: Dimidium autem moderatum est, & conducibile. Cui parum non est satis, ei nihil est satis. Cui quod satis est non est satis, ei nihil est satis.*

Παλὸν ἥμισυ παντὸς. Hesiod.

3. Example of *Agur.* A third Example I shall give instance in, is in *Agur.* Which name of *Agur* amongst some of the Rabbins is accounted an appellative name of * King *Solomon.* I put no stress upon that conjecture, however without all question this *Agur* was a man of great wisdom, humility and integrity, and contentedness: and it is worthy of an especial remark, what was that which in such an earnest prayer he begs of God, *Give me neither poverty, nor riches, feed me with food convenient for me. Lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor and steal, and take the name of God in vain.* He neither desired poverty, nor riches, but an indifferent estate. 1. He desired not an abundance of riches, nor a confluence of outward prosperity, lest he should with *Jesurun* abuse his plenty, of whom it is said,

* Rabbi Levi *putat etiam* Salomonem *fuisse nominatum* Agur *filium* Jake. Mercer.

Prov. 30. 8, 9.

1.

But

But Jesurun waxed fat and kicked. Thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness. Then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation. Riches are snares, and many times it so falls out, that πλησμονὴ καὶ ἐπιλησμονὴ, fulness and forgetfulness go together. 2. *Agur* desired not poverty, because it is accompanied with many inconveniences, and an occasion of many sins. He desired not poverty, lest he should be put upon the temptation of stealing, and so break the eighth Commandment, or lest through his poverty and necessitous condition, he should be put upon the temptation of taking the name of God in vain, and so incurr the breach of the third Commandment. Wherefore upon deliberate thoughts he desires convenient food, sufficient for necessity, and not for superfluity: as if he should say (to urge the significant expressions of two learned Authors,) one whereof saith, *Nourish me with the bread of my allowance, which may be sufficient for me, that I may thence be nourished with that which is convenient.* Hence we pray that God would give us our daily bread, (i.e.) * *Bread sufficient*

Deut. 32. 15.

2. *Paupertas inimica bonis est moribus omnis.*

Ale me pane demensi mei, qui mihi satis sit ut indè alar, qui mihi convenit. Mercer.

* *Quidam vertunt* panem sufficientiæ nostræ, *inter quos* Sculretus; *sed Syra melius à* Tremellio *vertuntur*, panem necessitatis nostræ, & à Bodero, indigentiæ nostræ, *videtur* ἐπιούσιον *accepisse, quasi* τὸν ἐπὶ τῇ οὐσίᾳ ἡμῶν ἁρμόζοντα. Lud. de Dieu, Thalazar in Prov. 30. 8.

for the day, or the bread of our sufficiency, and necessity and indigency, &c. Another learned Authour reads the words of *Agur*, *Da mihi prædam panem statuti mei*, and he quotes a Rabbin, who draws a similitude from wild beasts, *quæ in diem victitant, & non plura quærunt aut diripiunt.*

4. Example of St *Paul.* A fourth and last Example (which I shall mention out of Scripture) is St *Paul*, Phil. 4. 11, 12. *I have learned in whatever state I am therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; Every where and in all things I am instructed both how to be full, and to be hungry; both how to abound, and to suffer need*: this is an excellent profession, and in it are observable these particulars.

1. 1. A lesson learned and that is Contentment, Αὐτάρκης εἶναι. In a proper sense αὐτάρκεια, or self-sufficiency is attributed to God alone. But after a sort that man may be said to be αὐτάρκης, who is endowed with a contented frame of spirit.

Hoc est, novi quod adest boni consulere. Erasm.

2. 2. Consider who was this experienced scholar, it was the Apostle *Paul*. Here are two words whereby are set forth his thorough learning of his lesson, one is Ἔμαθον, *I have learned*: (i. e.) by study, exercise and daily practise. But it may be asked, whence had St *Paul* this learning? I answer

Αὐτάρκεια ~~Ἀρκεῖν~~ *& res dicitur quæ sufficit, & homo qui eo quod habet contentus est.* Grot.

Q.

anſwer 1. Negatively, the Apoſtle learned not this leſſon from *Plato's Academy*, nor from *Zeno's Stoa*, nor from *Ariſtotle's Lyceum*. All the moral precepts and documents of heathens came too ſhort of teaching ſo high a leſſon, as the divine art of Contentment. Though *Seneca* went far for a heathen in laying down precepts, yet in his own practice he condemned his precepts: and though he wrote much for the contempt of the world, yet he clave very cloſe to the world, witneſs his uſury and avarice notoriouſly branded in thoſe very times wherein he lived. 2. Poſitively anſwer, that this divine leſſon of Contentment the Apoſtle learned in the ſchool of Jeſus Chriſt. For Chriſt alone can teach us this leſſon, and cauſe us to learn it. Another word is mentioned v. 12. *I am inſtructed.* The metaphor is taken from holy things. Μυέω ſignifies *initio, imbuo*, thence μυστήριον is derived; ſo that hence it evidently appears, that the leſſon of Contentment is a great myſtery. This the Apoſtle learned, and in this myſtery he was inſtructed. 3. Conſider the extent & latitude of this great Art wch he had learned and of this high myſtery wherein he was inſtructed: it is ſaid ὃν ὁτε εἰμι, it is not ſaid ὃν ὁτε ἤμλων, in what ſtate I have been: that is paſt, & not to be recalled, neither is it ſaid ὃν ὁτε ἔσομαι, in what eſtate I

A. 1. *Negatively.* 2. *Poſitively.* 2. Μυέω. I am inſtructed. 3 Ἐν ὅτε εἰμι, in whatſoever ſtate I am.

shall be, for that is not in our power to determine, what shall be for the future, but it is said ἐν οἷς εἰμι, in what estate I am for the present: according to that condition, as God the Sovereign Lord of all is pleased to order, dispose and set out for me at the present, I have learned in that condition to be content. He then that is of a contented spirit, doth not torment and vex himself with the frequent remembrance and repetition of that prosperous estate which he hath formerly enjoyed and now is deprived of: neither doth he anxiously forecast and project what he may be, or would be, by giving way to tumultuous perplexing thoughts: but he upon serious and deliberate thoughts renders himself wholly to Gods disposal, and he is willing to live upon Gods finding; wherefore he labours to quiet and satisfie himself with the present portion that God hath lent unto him, for which he returns unto God the tribute of a thankful heart. There is great reason why all true beleevers should be contented with their present estate or condition: for (saith Calvin) *The Saints know that they so please God, therefore they measure sufficiency not by the plenty of things, but by the will of God, which they esteem of by the thing it self, because they are perswaded that all their affairs are governed by the providence and will of God.*

Sancti sciunt ita placere Deo, sufficientiam ergò non metiuntur rerum copiâ, &c. Calv. in loc.

In

It would be no difficult task to add testimonies from humane Authours, but I shall be very sparing in this kind. *Solinus Polyhistor* tells a story of one *Aglaus*, who all his time *went not one step out of his own ground.* Quintilian accounted his cottage his kingdom, and accounted it *riches enough to desire no more.* The Poet accounts the poor mans cottage *his kingdom.* By all these examples there is shewed much of a contented spirit. But I shall not stay in the farther enumeration of examples borrowed from heathens, having named Scripture examples, which are *instar omnium*, and it is needless labour to light a candle to the Sun which went before.

Cortina Aglaus *in angustissimo* Arcadiæ *angulo pauperis soli dominus, nunquam egressus paterni cespitis terminos invenitur.* Jul. Sol. Polyhist.

Hoc mihi parvulum & humilis tugurii rusticum culmen aquitas animi regna fecerat. Satisque divitiarum erat nihil amplius velle. Quint. Declam.

Pauperis & tugurii congestum cespite culmen,
Post aliquot mea regna videns mirabor aristas. Virgil. Eclog. 1.

Sect. 2.

Wherein the Doctrine is proved by Scripture.

IN the third place my work lies before me to give in Scripture precepts, commanding this excellent duty of Contentment, I shall insist on three or four select Scriptures onely. One is *Eccles. 9. 7. Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart, for God now accepteth thy works.*

3 Head of Scripture precepts commanding the duty of Contentment.

I ſhall endeavour to give the ſenſe of theſe
1. words. 1. It is ſaid *Go thy ways*: It is uſed adverbially, as much as *Age igitur, eia, agedum*; and this is a word of incouragement.
2. 2. *Eat thy bread and drink thy wine*, implying that we muſt eat and drink of our own, we muſt not by fraud or robbery get our meat and drink: for though ſtoln waters and bread of deceit may be ſweet at firſt, yet they end in gall and bitterneſs; any ſubſtance got unjuſtly will moulder away and
3. periſh. 3. It is ſaid *with joy and with a merry heart*. God would have us enjoy the fruit of our labours with cheerfulneſs, and it is well pleaſing to God that we ſhould enjoy comfortably and cheerfully the outward
4. things of this preſent life. 4. Here is a reaſon rendred: *for God now accepteth thy work*. (i. e.) It is well pleaſing to God for a man in the fear of God to labour diligently in the works of his calling, and to rejoyce in the bleſſing of God upon his labours. It is Gods acceptance of our work that expells anxiety and immoderate carefulneſs, and cauſeth joy and alacrity in the ſpirit. Compare this Scripture with *Eccleſ.* 3. 12, 13. *I know there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoyce and to do good in his life time, and alſo that every man ſhould eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labours, it is the gift of God.* Solomon gave his experimental verdict

verdict of all earthly things; and gives this ſentence, that there is no good in them, except a man with Contentment rejoyce in Gods bleſſings and do good in his life time. For he reaps the fruits of his charity, and doth moſt good, who makes his own eyes his *Overſeers*, and his own hands his *Executours*. He that hath a large and a liberal heart to *honour God with his ſubſtance*, and to *caſt his bread upon the waters*, and in the confluence of his riches to be doing of good, this is the man that enjoys the good of his labour. He ſeeth a good improvement of his charity, and he finds the benefit of it: for he enjoys the benefit of many prayers, and his own eyes ſee the rich increaſe of his charity. Contentment is a duty in an eſpecial manner enjoyned to ſouldiers. *Luke* 3. 14. *And the ſouldiers demanded of John the Baptiſt ſaying, And what ſhall we do? And he ſaid unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuſe any falſly, and be content with your wages.* Violence, falſe accuſations and robbery, are as well to be avoided by ſouldiers as other men. For war is not to be ſought for it ſelf, nor is the life of a ſouldier a conſtant abiding trade, but therefore men go to war, that peace may be procured and right be done. Further, this duty of Contentment is commanded indefinitely

Prov. 3. 9. Eccleſ. 11. 1.

Ideo ſuſcipienda ſunt bella ut pax quæſita eſſe videatur. Cic. Offic.

nitely unto all, *Hebr.* 13. 5. *Let your conversation be without covetousnes, and be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.* There are five negatives, which make in Greek the strongest negation. That place is taken out of *Josh.* 1. 6. God made his promise good to a little unto *Joshua*: let us make the same promise our own, and apply it to our particular concernments and conditions. Let us abandon covetousnes and a greedy pursuit after the world, and labour to learn this excellent art of Contentment, and then we may incourage our selves in this good word of promise, *That the Lord will never leave us nor forsake us.*

Οὐ μή σε ἀνῶ, οὐδ' οὐ μή σε ἐγκαταλίπω.

CHAP. IV.

Chap. 4. Wherein are handled four Arguments to perswade to Contentment.

Consisting of four Arguments to demonstrate the truth of the Doctrine, and perswade us to Contentment.

Sect. 1.

Consisting of two demonstrative Arguments.

Head 4. IN the fourth place let us assigne some Arguments for the demonstration of the Doctrine, *That it is our obliged duty to labour after a Contented mind, and acquiesce quietly*

eily in that present station and condition, wherein God is pleased to set us in this present world. For the demonstration of the truth of the Doctrine I shall insist on a fourfold Argument, drawn from Gods All-sufficiency and Wisdom, from the benefits which accrue from Contentment of mind, and the mischiefs which proceed from discontent.

The first Argument is drawn from Gods All-sufficiency. He is Omnipotent, and the Absolute Sovereign Commander of heaven and earth: all creatures are at the command and dispose of God: all the cattel upon a thousand mountains are at Gods command. *Psal.* 50. 10, 11. *Every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattel upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field are mine.* And as all cattel are at Gods command and disposal, so are all granaries at Gods command, and when he speaks the word they shall yield food and sustenance to his people. All treasures are at Gods disposal to enrich a people: and all magazines are at Gods disposal to defend a people. God is not onely potent and able to do some things, but omnipotent, and able to do all things. *Gen.* 17. 1. *God appeared to Abraham and said, I am the All-sufficient God,*

Arg. 1. drawn from Gods All-sufficiency.

Pronunciat Deus se ad protegendum Abram satis habere virtutis, quia nunquam aliter consistit fides nostra, quàm dum certò persuasi unicum Dei præsidium nobis sufficere, quicquid saluti nostræ in mundo adversum est securè despicimus. Calv.

walk

walk before me and be thou perfect. Luther ſaid of the devil, *Although he be able to do great things, yet he cannot do all things.* But herein conſiſts the Chriſtians ſtrong ground of conſolation, *Rev.* 19. 6. *The Lord God omnipotent reigneth.* Though we live in an iſland encompaſſed round about with ſeas, yet that the Lord reigneth is unto us ſtrong ground of ſecurity and protection. For ſo ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoyce: let the multitude of iſles be glad thereof.* God incouraged *Abraham* to the leading of an holy life from the conſideration of the Omnipotency and All-ſufficiency which was promiſed, *Gen.* 17. 1. *I am the Almighty God, Elſhaddai, All-ſufficient.* This one promiſe is of higher valuation then all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them. And *Abraham* had experimental knowledge of Gods all-ſufficiency, when he left his native countrey at Gods command, and went into the land of *Canaan*: as ſoon as he came into *Canaan* there was a famine in the land, *Gen.* 12. 10. yet God graciouſly ſuſtained him, and kept him and his great family alive in a time of famine. Afterward he went into *Egypt*, and there the beauty of *Sarah* became a ſnare, whereupon *Abraham* took an indirect courſe which was no leſs then equivocation, *v.* 12. but thinking thereby to eſcape

Eſto, diabolus ſit magnipotens, nunquam erit omnipotens. Luth.

Pſal 97. 1.

escape one danger he fell into a greater danger, and exposed his wife to a greater hazard, *v.* 15. But the power and mercy of God eminently appeared in a seasonable rescuing of *Abraham* from all dangers, *v.* 16. *v.* 20. This without all question was a great instance of the All-sufficiency of God: but a greater instance was put forth in the case of *Isaac*: for *Isaac* the son of the parents old age, the son of the promise, the beloved son, the onely son was appointed for slaughter by Gods command, *Gen.* 22. 2. *Take now thy son, thine onely son Isaac, whom thou lovest, & get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.* This was a difficult command contrary to flesh and bloud, a great trial of *Abraham*'s obedience. We read not that *Abraham* acquainted *Sarah* with the command, neither did he himself make the least demurr, or enter into the least dispute against it, but he yielded present and cheerful obedience thereunto, for so we read, *Gen.* 22. v. 10. *And Abraham stretched forth his hand and took the knife to slay his son:* now what was that which quieted and supported the heart of *Abraham*, but the consideration of Gods All-sufficiency. The same God who gave him *Isaac* was able to preserve him: see how strenuously the faith of *Abraham* acted.

Heb.

Heb. 11. 17, 18, 19. *By faith Abraham when he was tempted offered up Isaac, and he that had received the promise offered up his onely begotten son, of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called, accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead, from whence also he received him in a figure.*

Ἐν παραβολῇ receptit, neque mactavit, neque recepit ex mortuis, sed cum id facturus fuerit, perinde est ac si mactâsset, ac rursum in gratiam revocatum recepisset, hoc est quod dicitur ἐν παραβολῇ, quod ipsa res non facta sit, sed facta esse videatur. Clarius, Ὅθεν ἐν παραβολῇ (*i. e.*) ἐν νεκροῖς ἐκομίσατο παραβολῇ, per imaginem quandam resuscitationis ex mortuis, jam enim mortuus erat in sua & patris opinione. Grot.

And hereunto may be added the question of *Moses*, (which was in him a sin of unbelief) *Numb.* 11. 22. *Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them to suffice them? or shall the fish of the sea be gathered together for them to suffice them?* But observe what answer God gives to *Moses*, v. 23. *And the Lord said unto Moses, Is the Lords hand waxen short? Thou shalt see now, whether my word shall come to pass unto thee, or no. Amaziah* propounds a question of distrust and perplexity, but the Prophet gives him a full and satisfactory answer, 2 *Chron.* 25. 9. *And Amaziah said to the man of God, but what shall we do for the hundred talents, which I have given to the army of Israel? And the man of God answered, The Lord is able to give thee much more then this.* If then we would frequently and in good earnest make it our business to meditate

meditate on the power and All-sufficiency of God, and beleeve that God is always and throughly able to help, relieve and succour us in all our straits, we should upon such deliberate considerations, resolve to sit down quietly under various dispensations, and cheerfully submit and resigne our wills, to the disposing and ordering will of a wise and Omnipotent Lord God: but when people yeeld to the temptations of a distrustful murmuring spirit, and thereupon presume to call the power and providence of God into question, and repine at Gods dealings, then they utterly undo themselves, and instead of easing themselves of present burdens, they add to themselves far greater and weightier burdens too heavy for them to bear. If then we would be good proficients in the art of divine Contentment, we must beleeve this fundamental truth, *That God is All-sufficient.*

A second Argument is drawn from the Wisdom of God. The wisdom of God continually puts forth it self in the ordering and governing of all the affairs of the universe. And questionless the dividend and portion which God allows, is the best portion which any man can have, and what any enjoy is from God, *who giveth liberally to all men and upbraideth not.* What wicked men

Arg. 2. drawn from the wisdom of God.

James 1. 5. τῶ διδόντος Θεῦ ἁπλῶς καὶ μὴ ὀνειδίζοντος.

possess

poſſeſs is by common donation and ordinary providence; *Ex largitate Dei*, they partake in a great meaſure of Gods liberality. They have *their portion in this life*, and the riches, honours and pleaſures of this terreſtrial world is all the heaven they ſhall have: and if we enter upon deliberate conſiderations, by what means wicked men come by their riches, and how they purchaſe earthly riches with the loſs of their heavenly-born-being ſouls, we have no cauſe to envy the proſperity of ungodly men. How many are there, who by oppreſſion, couſenage, extortion and forgeries, compaſs to themſelves great eſtates? they add houſe to houſe, and call them by their own names, and raiſe their buildings upon the ruines of others, even of widows, orphans, and others unable to defend themſelves; ſo that might many times prevails above right. But theſe men verifie an old proverb, in *being peny wiſe and pound fooliſh:* for by overbuſying themſelves to heap up tranſient and periſhing riches, they loſe a durable ſubſtance (*i. e.*) eternal riches, and being over ſolicitous for riches in this world, they loſe the riches of heaven in a better world to all eternity. *David* was a while at a ſtand, and ſtumbled at the proſperity of the wicked, *Behold* (ſaith he) *theſe are the ungodly who proſper in the world, they increaſe in riches,*

Pſal. 17. 14.

Pſal. 73. 12, 13.

ches, verily I have cleanſed my heart in vain, and waſhed my hands in innocency. But *David* corrects himſelf and goeth into the Sanctuary, and there his judgement is ſet right, *Until I went into the Sanctuary of God, then underſtood I their end. Surely thou didſt ſet them in ſlippery places, thou caſteſt them down into deſtruction.* The Prophet *Jeremiah* was much perplexed about the ſelf-ſame thing. He pleads and expoſtulates the caſe with God after this manner, *Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee, yet let me talk with thee of thy righteous judgements, wherefore doth the way of the wicked proſper? wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherouſly? Thou haſt planted them, yea they have taken root, they grow, yea they bring forth fruit, Thou art near in their mouth, yet far from their reins.* But none have cauſe to envy them, if they obſerve how the Prophet prayeth againſt them, *Pull them out like ſheep for the ſlaughter, and prepare them for the day of ſlaughter.* Pſal. 73. 17, 18. Jer. 12. 1, 2. Jer 12. v. 3.

But though wicked men have a liberal ſhare in worldly riches, (and they have ſuch a right as no man may rob and defraud them;) yet godly men enjoy the things of this life by ſpecial providence, and by covenant-intereſt, and they have all the creatures ſanctified to them; for they enjoy Chriſt

in the creatures: for so saith the Apostle,
Rom. 8. 32. *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?* Gods children have an ample Charter of immunities, (as the Apostle mentions) 1 *Cor.* 3. 22, 23. *Whether Paul, or Apollo, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, and ye are Christs, and Christ is Gods.*

Quest. But how are all things the interest of Saints?

Answ. I answer, 1. Because they have an interest in Christ, and so they hold all *in capite*, in their head Christ, and this of all others is the best tenure. 2. They have a promise of all. They have promises of Christ, of his Spirit, and of heaven, and all *the promises are yea and Amen*, (*i.e.*) they are sure and certain, not off and on, not fast and loose, but firm, and sure and stedfast; these are *precious promises*. 3. The Saints have all by donation, and what can be surer and better title then free gift? what can be so sure as the free gift of the omnipotent Lord God? Christ hereupon comforts his children, and encourageth them against all distrustful cares and fears, *Luke* 12. 32. *Fear not little flock, for it is your Fathers good pleasure to give you the kingdom.* Here is nothing of merit, but all of mercy:

1.
2.
2 Cor. 1. 20.
2 Pet. 1. 4. Τίμια ἐπαγγέλματα.
3.
Ὅτι εὐδόκησε.

mercy: nothing to be aſcribed to mans free will, but all muſt be aſcribed to Gods free grace. I ſhall add onely one more appoſite Scripture to prove all things to be by Gods free donation, and that is an excellent and choice promiſe, *Pſal.* 84. 11. *For the Lord God is a ſun, and a ſhield, the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.* 4. The ſaints have poſſeſſion of all, and ſo all is theirs, *Joh.* 3. 36. *He that beleeveth on the Son hath everlaſting life.* All Gods children have the earneſt of their inheritance, and ſome firſt-fruits and fore-taſts of heaven. They have heaven *inchoative* begun in an holy life and converſation in this world, and they ſhall have it *perfective* in glory and happineſs in another world. Not a bit of bread which a true beleever eats, but he begs Gods bleſſing upon it; and as he prays, that God would give him his daily bread and ſanctifie the uſe of it to him, ſo eſpecially he prays that God would give him Chriſt *the Bread of life.* Let us then ſeriouſly conſider, that whatſoever God giveth to one or other, he gives in wiſdom. To one he gives more, to another he gives leſs, and yet for moſt wiſe ends and purpoſes. God knows what is better for every one of us, then we can know for our ſelves. Doth not experience teſtifie how many be- 4. Joh. 6. 35.

ing overcome by the temptations of proſperity are utterly undone, for that their plenty and riches have become ſnares to them? For they grow wanton and luxurious in the abundance of outward things, and ſo in their fulneſs they forget God, and are like thoſe ſwine that eat the maſt, but never look up to the tree, from whence they receive them. And many there are, who when they were in a meaner condition could never beleeve, neither did it ever enter into their hearts to think that they ſhould carry things ſo proudly and inſolently as they do, being advanced to a higher condition. None ſufficiently know their own hearts, and how proſperity will puff them up. *Dic mihi ſi fueris tu leo, qualis eris.* Captain *Hazael* abhorred the thoughts of doing that, which he boldly ventur'd upon, when he was King *Hazael*. It uſually ſo falls out, that ſome are far better in a meaner condition, then they are after they are promoted to a higher condition: ſo that thoſe riches and honours, which (if well improved) might have been for their welfare, through abuſe and miſemployment prove unto them occaſions of falling. Now God in wiſdom orders all things, and allotteth unto us ſuch a *dimenſum* and portion, which he knoweth fitteſt for us. A wiſe phyſician diets his patient, and preſcribes

2 Kings 8. v. 12, 13.

ſcribes unto him, leſt he ſhould take that which might be hurtful unto him. So doth the wiſe God of heaven and earth give us convenient food, ſuch as is moſt ſuitable to our condition. If we then ſeriouſly meditate on the wiſe diſpoſing providence of our gracious God, we ſhall bear all diſpenſations with a quiet and contented frame of ſpirit, and in all things ſubmit and reſigne our wills unto the will of God, accounting his will *good, acceptable and perfect*. The grand duty incumbent upon us is this, to make a good improvement of one or more talents wherewith God inſtructeth us, and to order our affairs with diſcretion, and to endeavour to be thankful for what we have; ſo (through the grace of God) we ſhall be good practitioners and proficients in this excellent art of divine Contentment. Rom. 12. 2.

Sect. 2.

Conſiſting of a third and fourth Argument.

I Proceed to a third Argument, to engage to Contentedneſs of ſpirit, and this is drawn from thoſe ſingular benefits accruing from Contentment. *Argumentum ab utili* is uſually a prevailing piece of Rhetorick, and by this the Oratour perſwades his auditours to approve of what he commends unto them. *Arg.* 3. drawn from the benefits coming from Contentedneſs.

There is a twofold benefit or emolument ariſing from a Contented mind, *viz.* upon a temporal and ſpiritual account.

1. Upon a temporal account, Contentedneſs of mind brings great benefits.

1. Upon a temporal account. All the outward accommodations of this world whether they be riches, or honours, or relations, *&c.* are much ſweetned to us, and enjoyed comfortably and cheerfully by vertue of a Contented and quiet frame of ſpirit. No man ſleeps ſo ſweetly as a contented man, *Eccleſ.* 5, 12. *The ſleep of a labouring man is ſweet whether he eat little or much, but the abundance of the rich will not ſuffer him to ſleep.* A Contented man eateth his meat ſavourily, and reliſheth ſweetneſs in hard meat and courſe fare: his heart is merry, and a good conſcience is a cauſe of true mirth. Prov. 15. 15. Hence ſaith the wiſe man, *He that is of a merry heart hath a continual feaſt.* *Solomon* made a magnificent feaſt for ſeven days, and *Ahaſuerus* made a feaſt for one hundred and fourſcore days: but he that feaſts with a good conſcience keeps a feaſt every day. A Contented man goeth on cheerfully in the works of his calling, with ſuch a calm and ſedate ſpirit, as he is neither puft up with proſperity, nor caſt down by adverſity: inſomuch that ſuch a man though of a mean eſtate enjoys all that he hath, be it leſs or more, more comfortably then a male contented perſon, who hath in his poſ-

ſeſſion

ſeſſion thouſands of gold and ſilver. It is not the high and honourable condition, nor the rich and wealthy condition, that can render a mans life pleaſant and comfortable; but it is Gods bleſſing that maketh rich, and adds no ſorrow to it. I have read how a learned Heathen deſcribes a happy man thus, *He is not happy who hath all that he deſires, but he is happy who deſires not what he hath not.* Take then a ſurvey of contented perſons, who have learned this rare art of Contentment, and you ſhall ſee that they live comfortably, and enjoy that little that they have with more ſatisfaction and complacency then multitudes who have more pounds, then the other hath pence. Wherefore to eat and drink and ſleep with a merry heart, and to follow the works of our calling with cheerfulneſs of ſpirit, the ready way is to put in practice that excellent leſſon of the Apoſtle, *I have learned* (ſaith he) *in whatſoever ſtate I am, therewith to be content.* For he is the wiſe man, and thrives beſt in whatſoever he ſets his heart and hands unto, who hath learned this choice leſſon of Contentment. And thus upon a temporal account great is the benefit which contentment produceth.

Beatus eſt, non qui habet quæ cupit, ſed qui non cupit quæ non habet Sen. *Et minùs hæc optat, qui non habet.* Juven. Satyr. 14.

Phil 4. 11.

2. Upon a ſpiritual account much benefit ariſeth from a contented ſpirit. For inſtance,

2 Upon a ſpiritual account Contentment brings great benefit.

ſtance, in hearing, a meek and quiet frame of heart much conduceth to our profiting by the word of God. For ſo ſaith the Apoſtle, *Wherefore lay apart all filthineſs and ſuperfluity of naughtineſs, and receive with meekneſs the engraffed word, which is able to ſave your ſouls.* When a man comes to hear a Sermon with a quiet and calm ſpirit, O what wonderful effects hath the Word upon ſuch a perſon; hereby his attention and intention are quickned: the affections are ſet in right order, and the memory is retentive. I may give another inſtance in prayer, When diſcontented perplexing thoughts are driven away, (as *Abraham* drave away the fowls, which ſome apply to vain diſtracting thoughts) then are Chriſtians prepared to pour out their hearts to God in prayer. So likewiſe for meditation, that I may call an up-hill duty, whereby a Chriſtian aſcends from earth to heaven in divine contemplations. There is no greater obſtacle to divine meditation then a perplexed ſpirit intangled with variety of worldly incumbrances. Wherefore ſuch perſons as delight in meditation retire themſelves as *Iſaac* did, (as we read of him) *And Iſaac went out to meditate in the field at even-tide.* Serenity and ſettledneſs of mind do very much conduce to the profitable exerciſe of meditation: but when the hurry of

James 1. 21.

Gen. 15. 11.

Gen. 24. 63.

of the world, and the carking and vexatious cares about it ſurprize our hearts, and take poſſeſſion of them, then we become altogether as unfit and indiſpoſed for meditation, as a bird is for flying, either when an heavy ſtone is tied to her leg, or elſe when ſhe is entangled by lime-twigs: if then we would learn to climb up the hill, and be in the mount with *Moſes*, and enjoy communion with God in the exerciſe of this divine art of meditation, we muſt in the mean time labour for a ſerious, compoſed and contented ſpirit, and abandon vexatious, diſcontented and carking cares. And thus upon a temporal and a ſpiritual account both, we ſhall be exceeding great gainers by being well inſtructed in this myſtery of Contentment, and by being diligent practitioners in this excellent art.

Arg. 4. drawn from the miſchiefs of diſcontent.

The fourth and laſt Argument ſhall be drawn from the miſchiefs that proceed from diſcontent.

There is a threefold miſchief occaſioned by a diſcontented ſpirit, *viz.* to the body, to the eſtate, and to the ſoul.

1. Diſcontent is miſchievous to the body.

1. Diſcontent is miſchievous unto the body, for when a man is tortured with variety of diſcontented and vexing thoughts, his body is macerated with continual grief, and pines away till it become a very *Skeleton*,

ton. Though ſuch a male-contented man lie ſoft in a bed of Down, yet he feels no refreſhment there: becauſe he takes no more contentment upon ſuch a bed then a bed full of thorns. At his table, where is ſumptuous fare, choice and delicate food; yet all thoſe ſweet dainties are ſawced and ſowred with a fretting diſcompoſed ſpirit, ſo that his bread taſtes no better then gravel, and his cup taſtes as bad as poiſon. Wherefore any man will enjoy as much eaſe and delight, even when he is tortured upon a rack, and his bones are diſlocated upon a wheel, as he ſhall enjoy who is tormented with a repining, impatient and male-contented ſpirit. Sleep (which is called beloved ſleep, and a great refreſhment to nature; yet it) refreſheth not ſuch a man. Bread and water which are the ſtay and ſtaff of a mans life, theſe nouriſh not, nor are digeſted; good and profitable company delight not; melodious muſick cannot pleaſe the ears, gaudy pageants cannot pleaſe the eye, when the heart is incumbred and toſt up and down, and the head troubled and diſquieted with variety of carking imaginations, nothing can give content. *Jonadab* asked *Amnon*, *Why art thou being the Kings ſon lean from day to day?* So great, rich and honourable perſons in this world may have this queſtion propounded to them,

Pſal. 127. 2.

2 Sam. 13. 4.

Why

Why are you being Nobles and rich Perſonages, ſo much macerated with grief and vexatious troubles? Is not this the reaſon, becauſe your hearts are unſetled and unſatisfied, and the pomp and vanities of the world ſit too heavy, and too cloſe and near unto your hearts? This is the main cauſe oft times, why the body doth inſenſibly pine away with fretting; becauſe the mind is ſo diſtracted with tumultuous perturbations, and perplexed with variety of earthly intanglements.

2. The miſchief of diſcontent evidenceth it ſelf to the eſtate of a diſcontented perſon. For by projecting, contriving and diſtracting himſelf about multitudes of buſineſs, he knows not how to fix upon any thing to any good purpoſe, or intent. So true is that obſervation of that great Hiſtorian, *That diverſity of things breaks off the edge of intention.* What got that notorious fool mentioned in the Goſpel by plotting and contriving ways for the advancement of his eſtate, and taking of his fill in his imaginary delights and jollities. He was on a ſudden diſappointed of his expectations, *Luk.* 12. 19. we read what he promiſed to himſelf, *And I will ſay to my ſoul, Soul, thou haſt goods laid up for many years, take thine eaſe, eat, drink and be merry.* But obſerve what became of him, v. 20.

2 The miſchief of diſcontent is to the eſtate.

Rerum diverſitas aciem intentionis abrumpit. Florus.

Luke 12. 16.

But

But God ſaid unto him, Thou fool, this night thy ſoul ſhall be required of thee, then whoſe ſhall thoſe things be, which thou haſt provided? And a particular application is made, v. 21. *So is he that layeth up treaſure for himſelf, and is not rich towards God.*

3. Diſcontentedneſs is miſchievous to the ſoul.

A third and laſt miſchief (which I ſhall name) is this, That diſcontentedneſs of ſpirit is miſchievous to the ſoul, and ſuch a miſchief as redounds to the ſoul is the worſt miſchief of all. For it is an experimented obſervation that of all perſons there is none who more prejudice their own ſouls, then male-contented perſons: when they are in a Congregation, where the Word is preached, the entanglements of the world do ſeiſe ſo much upon them, ſo that they heed no more what the Preacher ſaith then the ſeats whereon they ſit. Theſe auditours are of the ſame temper as thoſe were, of whom the Prophet ſpeaks, *Ezek.* 33. 31. *And they come unto thee as thy people cometh, and they ſit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they ſhew much love, but their heart goeth after their coveteouſneſs.* When they are admitted into conference with ſerious Chriſtians, by whoſe ſociety they might be gainers, then the cares of the world creep into their thoughts, and ſo diſturb them, inſomuch that all good

good discourse is lost upon them, and becomes like water spilt upon the ground, that cannot be gathered up again. Farther, in their private prayers the world steps in, and distracts them in the performance of that duty. And when they should in a solemn manner at the Lords Supper keep their thoughts to the great business in hand, then the world interposeth, and diverts them from serious meditations. Experienced Christians are sensible of these failings, and bewail them in their serious addresses to the throne of grace. Who is able to declare sufficiently, how many are those mischievous consequences which grow upon this root of discontent, which is a root of bitterness that brings forth nothing but gall and wormwood? It is evident by what hath been forementioned, that the body, estate and soul of a man are all exceedingly the worse by reason of a discontented spirit.

CHAP.

Chap. 5. Containing an use of Reproof and Examination.

CHAP. V.

Containing an Use of Reproof and Examination.

Sect. 1.

Containing an Use of Reproof.

HAving handled the Doctrinal part, I now proceed to particular application. Let us then reflect upon our selves in these five ensuing Uses, *viz.* For Reproof, Examination, exhortation, direction and Consolation.

Use 1. For reproof of all male-contented spirits.

The first use is for Reproof of all male-contented spirits, who are meer strangers to this necessary duty of Contentment. Although they have food and raiment, and peradventure of the best and choicest in both kinds; yet they have not copied out this excellent lesson of divine Contentment. Hence the confluence of riches and honours, pleasures and profits of the world are a heavy burden and vexation to them, because they enjoy them not with a quiet and a cheerful mind. Now, that I may not stay in generals, I will propound particular instances, and so discover who are

are discontented and never satisfied, and so come within the verge of this Use of Reprehension.

1. All envious persons are in an especial manner to be numbred amongst discontented persons. For because others are greater and richer, and in higher esteem then themselves, therefore they torment, vex and fret themselves: this sin the Psalmist forbids, *Psal.* 37. 1. *Fret not thy self because of evil doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.* Their doom he prophesieth, v. 2. *For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.* And the remedy to cure envy, is prescribed, v. 3. *Trust in the Lord and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.* The way to cure envy, is to put our trust in God, and to go to him as to our strong hold, wherein we may repose our confidence. Apposite to this purpose is the charge of *Solomon*, Prov. 23. 17. *Let not thine heart envy sinners, but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long.* The fear of God fixed in the heart is a special means to root out this weed of envy. But where the fear of God is wanting, envy doth increase and multiply. Whoever therefore willingly allows himself in this grand sin of envy, he can never enjoy himself, nor any thing he possesseth comfortably:

1 Envious persons are discontented persons.

tably: for though he hath a liberal portion of earthly things, yet he is still hankering after more, projecting and contriving variety of ways, according to the dictates of his own fancy, how to add house to house, land to land, and one bag of gold or silver to another; and when he takes notice that some others are richer then himself, he envies and grudgeth them, and his heart riseth against them; so that any mans prosperity is the *eye-sore* of an envious man. If then we would learn this lesson of divine Contentment, we should pluck up root and branch this bitter and cursed weed of envy; for whereever envy grows, contentment cannot grow near it. Envy is so bad and mischievous a neighbour, as it hates and expells contentment out of its coasts. And contentment of spirit is so good a neighbour of it self, as it neither desires nor seeks after acquaintance and neighbourhood with envy. There is not a greater antipathy in nature between a wolf and a lamb, then there is in morality between an envious and a contented person. Envy and Contentment are inconsistent, and cannot keep a mutual intimacy and correspondence together: still there will be clashing and heart-burning between them. Though *Saul* was a King, yet he could not enjoy himself contentedly, because he envyed *David* for the commendation,

dation which the women gave him in their singing and dancing; and the envy of *Saul* brake forth into such rage and fury, as to seek *David*'s destruction. *Saul*'s envy and malice were so exceeding great, that he envyed *David* his very life, and thought that his posterity should never thrive, as long as *David* lived, 1 *Sam.* 20. 31. *For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom.* All the grandieur and preferments which *Haman* enjoyed were nothing, so long as *Mordecai* was alive. Though *Mordecai* then was an inconsiderable person, and lightly esteemed of in *Ahasuerus* his Court, yet *Haman* envied him his life. For in the confluence of his great preferments, he enters this protestation against his own contentment, *Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the Kings gate.* Whereever envy is, there discontent lodgeth under the same roof. Esth. 5. 13.

2. Proud, ambitious, haughty spirited persons are to be reproved for their great discontent: for they are always puft up with ambitious aspiring thoughts of climbing higher. They are not satisfied with their present condition, but still pursue greater things for themselves. This was a check to *Baruch*, Jer. 45. 5. *And seekest thou great* 2 Proud ambitious persons are discontented persons.

things for thy self, seek them not. This was the sin of ambition whereof those Apostles were guilty, *Luke* 22. 24. *And there was also a strife amongst them, which of them should be counted the greatest. A strange thing* (as a learned Commentatour observes) *that in such a time of mourning, they should be at leisure for an ambitious contention.* And if through infirmity good men be overtaken with this sin of ambition, questionless ungodly great men drive a trade and habituate themselves in pride and ambition. Suppose a great proud man abound in titles of honour, even so many as to clog his memory; yet notwithstanding his proud spirit is insatiate. *Cesar* and *Pompey* were of such high spirits, insomuch as one could in no wise brook, that the other should be his equal, nor he brook, that the other should be his superiour. The Prophet *Jeremy* could prophesie nothing to the content of his proud hearers: for so we read, *Jer.* 43. 2. *Then spake Azariah the son of Hoshaiah, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the proud men, saying unto Jeremiah, Thou speakest falsly: The Lord our God hath not sent thee to say, Go not into Egypt to sojourn there.* A proud person is in no kind a contented man: for dignities and preferments, he thinks the greatest he can get too little, and many preferments heaped on him, he reckons but as a very

Vix credibile tam luctuoso tempore vacâsse animos ambitioso certamini. Grot.

a very few. And as for favour and estimation in the world, a proud person thinks he can never be enough valued and applauded: his own glory he prefers before Gods glory, and chooseth rather the praise of men then the glory of God. And as for spiritual matters, which most nearly concern the soul, none more discontented then a proud person; for he is so well conceited of himself, that he is too proud to learn; he despiseth instruction, and thinks himself wiser then the best of Teachers. If a proud opinionated man hear a plain powerful sermon, he is not contented with the simplicity of the Gospel, his palate is vitiated, and he cannot relish wholesom food; he cannot content himself with the form of sound words; but he affects curiosities of humane inventions, fragments of Poets, gleanings of Comedians, and such like trash he prefers before plain edifying preaching: so then look upon a proud person upon any account whatever, you shall find him a discontented man.

3. A third sort of discontented Persons (which come under this reproof) are covetous greedy worldlings, mammonists, who are earth'd and swallowed up with the immoderate love of the world. These, though they have much of the world already, yet they are of such a ravenous disposition, as

Covetous persons are discontented persons.

they are greedy after more. Their hunger and thirst is after corn and wine, and they have a large grasp to hold together abundance of the worlds goods. A covetous man degenerates into a horseleech, and useth the self-same language *Give, give.* And upon a review, a covetous man is far worse then the horseleeches daughter; for when she hath glutted her self with abundance of bloud-sucking, she lets go her hold and falls off; but a covetous man is so far from falling off, as he falls faster on, and therefore he falls upon new projects and devices to satisfie (though he will never be satisfied) his devouring and ravenous appetite. Hell and the grave are never satisfied; no more can the hell and grave of an inordinate greedy desire after the world ever receive any satisfaction.

There are two significant words used by the Apostle to set forth covetousness: one is πλεονεξία, and the other is φιλαργυρία. The first word is πλεονεξία, which word signifieth *having more*; so that a covetous man is still desiring of more. And this desire is *immoderate, even with the loss of others* (as *Beza* observes.) This man is *rapax, greedy*; to be compared to a greedy devouring wolf, or to a vulture and cormorant, swallowing up all he can get.

Ex vi nominis significat studiū semper plus habendi. Gersh.

Significat immodicam acquirendi cupiditatem, etiam cum alierum detrimento. Beza in Luc. 12. 15.

If

If he may compass riches, he cares not how he comes by them, whether *per fas vel nefas, quocunque modo rem*, all is one to him; so he may swim, he cares not who sinks; so he may stand, he cares not who falls; so he may be a gainer, he cares not who is the loser. Wherefore he sticks not, nor scruples at oppression, rapine and violence, bribery, calumnies and unjust suits, sacriledge, perjury, (for any thing he can swallow down, which may bring most grist to his own mill.) And this man (though he escape the punishment of man oftentimes, yet) God brands him for an Idolater, *Eph.* 5. 3. Amongst other choice qualifications of a Bishop, one is -- *not greedy of filthy lucre*, μὴ αἰσχροκερδῆ. Covetousness is a great sin in any man, but more notorious in a Minister of the Gospel. God abhorrs a covetous man, and bars him out of heaven. The covetous are ranked amongst the vilest of sinners, *Know ye not, that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.* Psal. 10, 3. 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10.

Another word whereby covetousness is express'd is φιλαργυρία -- *the love of money.* φιλαργυρία.

1 Tim. 6. 10. *ney.* And the Apostle tells us, *that it is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.* There is an emphatical word, which signifies ducking or plunging. Covetous muckworms are as it were duck'd and plunged over head and ears with the love of money, and therefore (unless a hand of mercy deliver them) they cannot escape without inevitable destruction. And such a man whose heart is thus swallowed up with the love of the world, is as much *tenax*, to hold fast what he hath already got, as *rapax*, ravenous and greedy after more. Who are there to be found of such sordid and penurious spirits, as covetous persons? They sit upon their riches, as *Rachel* sat upon the stuff, not willing to rise up from it. Gold and silver are the darlings which they hug in their bosoms. *Job* sets a mark on them (as their speech bewrays them) *who say to the wedge of gold thou art our confidence.* Wherefore a greedy penurious man grudgeth himself his necessary food and raiment. As by oppressing, griping and racking, he is a thief to the poor in robbing and spoiling of them, by a sin of commission; or otherwise by not relieving, not feeding, nor clothing them, which is a sin of

Βυθίζουσι, *Ad hoc ut posthac evadendi emergendique facultatem non habeant.* Oecumen. in locum.

Job 31. 24.

of omission; so he is a thief to himself, being not willing to allow himself what is necessary and fitting for his estate and calling. And of all others, no man is so great a *male-content*, as a covetous muck-worm: for the more he hath, the more he craves; as the more fuel is added to the fire, it breaks forth into a greater flame: so more riches, as gold and silver, lands and revenues, when they are given unto a covetous man, they are like oyl cast into the fire to make a greater blaze; he is still disturbed in his spirit, and perplexed with multitude of tumultuous thoughts, because he hath not all that he desires: so then it evidently appears, that covetousness and contentedness are opposite, and can admit no terms of reconciliation; for one goeth out as soon as the other comes in.

Cupit hic gazis implere famem, nec tamen omnis pluga gemiferi sufficit Istri, nec tota sitim India vincit, &c. Sen. Trag. Herc. Oet.

4. A fourth and last sort (which I shall mention) of discontented persons, who fall under this reproof, are *Murmurers*, who are frequent in muttering, whining, and in using of querulous and reviling language, even to the traducing of divine providence, and repining at divine dispensations: because they have not what they would have; they are so far from being thankful for that which they have, (and the least that they

4. Murmurers are discontented persons.

have is infinitely more then they deserve) as they exceedingly offend through murmuring, grudging and complaining for what they want. The Israelites highly provoked God in this kind, and deeply smarted for their provocation. Insomuch as their example is a *sea-mark* or monitory example, to beware of their sin, lest we partake of their punishments, 1 *Cor.* 10. 10. *Neither murmure ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.* The Israelites upbraided of peevish and froward children, who (as we use to say) are never contented, neither full nor fasting. They were afflicted with hard bondage in *Ægypt*, and were forced to serve with rigour; so that all they did eat and drink was sauced with hard servitude. But as soon as ever they had obtained their liberty, and were delivered from their Ægyptian bondage, and in the wilderness met with wants of bread and water, they fell a murmuring, and were so insensible of, and unthankful for their liberty restored, as that they preferred the garlick and onions of *Ægypt*, before their deliverance. Wherefore in a mutinous and rebellious manner, they combined against *Moses* and *Aaron*, *Numb.* 14. 4. *And they said one to another, let us make a Captain, and let us return into Ægypt.* None are more discontented then murmurers:

rers: Their thoughts are disturbed, their devotions distracted, the works of their calling are neglected, their sleep passeth from them, they relish no pleasant taste in their eating and drinking, because their minds are disquieted and unsatisfied. Hence it comes to pass, that the tongue of a murmurer is set on fire of hell, because he gives himself up to a habit of reviling and railing at others, because they are in a more prosperous condition then himself. This murmuring language grows on that cursed root of unbelief, and diffidence of Gods promises and providences. Hence, from this sin of murmuring arise so many fluctuating and tumultuous thoughts, and so many roving imaginations, which obstruct the tranquillity of the mind, and disorder the affections by putting them into a confusion, or else setting the whole man in combustion.

Sect. 2.

Use 2. For Examination.

Shewing who is the Author of Contentment, and what are the Objects of Contentment.

I Proceed to a second use, which shall be for Examination. The question is, *Whether we have learned this divine and excellent art of Contentment?* *Quest.*

For a serious and deliberate answer to this *Answ.*

this question, we must make enquiry into three things, and give answers accordingly. 1. We are to enquire of whom we must learn this great and choice lesson of Contentment? 2. What is the object of Contentment? 3. What distinguishing characters may be set down, whereby we may know whether we have learned this excellent lesson of Contentment, yea or no?

Quest. 1. Of whom we must learn contentment.

1. We must make enquiry, of whom we must learn this lesson? The ground of enquiry is, because every one cannot teach this lesson of Contentment, and it is not commonly to be found. It is not an herb that groweth in every garden, but it is a plant of our heavenly Fathers plantation.

Answ. Given negatively and positively.

I shall therefore first answer negatively, where contentment is not to be found; then secondly, positively, where it is to be found.

1. Negatively, I shall produce an instance or two, where contentment cannot be had as,

1. Nature cannot teach contentment.

1. Nature cannot teach us this lesson. Nature is corrupt, vitiated and depraved; for we are by nature inclined to all manner of inordinate affections, and the vergency of the heart is carried in a swift career after every lust, as a boat in a full tide, which with the sail hoised up is carried down the stream, with all manner of violence. Nature excites us to a greedy and eager pursuit

ſuit after the world, and provokes the appetite to all inordinate and boundleſs deſires: inſomuch as a man may as eaſily fill a ſieve brim full with water, as fill up the diſorderly deſires of a natural man.

2 Moral education cannot teach contentment.

Secondly moral Education cannot teach a man this excellent leſſon of Contentment. *Seneca* though he wrote rare precepts and counſels for contempt of the world and for a contented mind, yet it is ſtoried of him, that he was a great Uſurer, and a greedy covetous man. All the grounds of contentment which Philoſophers give are of too low an elevation: For (ſaith a learned Doctour.) *Their Topicks were taken from the dignity of man, from the baſeneſs of outward things and mutability of fortune, and from the ſhortneſs and uncertainty of life, and ſuch like other conſiderations as come within their own ſphere, uſeful indeed in their kind, but unable to build ſuch a pile or roof as they would build thereupon.*

Dr *Sanderſons* Serm. 2. *ad Aulam.* p. 116. fol.

But as I have ſhewed negatively where contentment cannot be learned, I will now ſhew poſitively where it is to be learned, and of whom, *viz.* we muſt repair unto the Sanctuary and ſearch the holy Scriptures, and beſeech God to teach us to make a right application of them. We muſt be taught of God, and anointed by the Spirit of God, before we can learn the excellent leſ-

The holy Scriptures teach contentment.

ſon

ſon of divine Contentment. St *Paul* though he was an *Hebrew* of the *Hebrews*, (*i. e.*) an *Hebrew* both by the father and mothers ſide; though he was bred up at the feet of *Gamaliel*, a learned Doctour and expoſitour of the law, and though he was one of the *Phariſees*, the ſtricteſt Sect amongſt the *Jews* (for the proverb was amongſt them, *That if onely two men were to be ſaved, one of them would be a Phariſee*) yet notwithſtanding all theſe advantages St *Paul* had, he could learn this leſſon of Contentment no where elſe but in the ſchool of Jeſus Chriſt. Now it is the ſaving knowledge of Chriſt ſeated in the heart, and the image of Chriſt (which is righteouſneſs and holineſs) formed in the life and converſation, whereby a man is caſt into a new mould, which frames the heart into ſuch a ſerene and quiet temper, as notwithſtanding ſtorms and tempeſts are boiſterous without, yet there is a marvellous calm within. So then queſtionleſs contentment is the gift of God; of him we muſt beg, he is the ſole donour of it. Contentment is a leſſon onely taught in the ſchool of Chriſt: other teachers (whatſoever they may pretend) can never perſwade the heart to a quiet and ſettled repoſe and acquieſcence, but ſtill there will ariſe perturbations of the mind, which will ſet the whole man out of order. But Chriſt,

Christ, who is the onely Lord and Master, who hath sovereign and absolute command over the hearts and consciences of all men, he can perswade the heart and prevail with it effectually to be contented, acquiesce and rest in him, as lines in their proper centre. Philosophers spent much time in prescribing precepts (which they call their *Documenta*) for the better ordering of the lives and conversations of mankind: but all their precepts reach no farther then the outward man: they medled not at all with the inward man: whereas contentment and discontentment arise from the mind, and from things within, rather then from things without; wherefore the wound is most usually inward, and therefore more tormenting. The mind apprehends things after a different way, and as there is a different conception, content and discontent act accordingly. Now when the mind of a godly man is first placed on God, and wholly depends on him, and accounts God his riches, treasure and honour; and accounts *Christ all in all*, then there abides contentment and tranquillity in abundance in that soul.

In the second place (in handling this use) we are to propound an enquiry, What is the object of Contentment? I answer with the Apostle, *Phil.* 1, 11. *I have learned in whatsoever*

2. The objects of Contentment.

ſoever ſtate I am, therewith to be content. The Apoſtle ſpecifies without any limitation, Ἐν οἷς εἰμι, as if he ſhould thus inlarge himſelf; Be my eſtate what it is, indifferently high or low, rich or poor, proſperous or adverſe, yet I am ſenſible that all comes from the ordering and diſpoſing wiſdom of God; therefore I not onely muſt of neceſſity bid my preſent condition welcome, but I am willing with cheerfulneſs to bid it welcome: not onely of neceſſity I yeeld and ſubmit to Gods providence, but I ſubmit with a ready and cheerful ſpirit; becauſe I know and acknowledge all Gods diſpenſations to be wiſe and holy, and it is my obliged duty to reſt ſatisfied, and bow my ſelf in ſubmiſſion to them. We muſt know that it is a point of wiſdom to learn contentment, as well in an higher as in a lower condition, in a great, as well as in a mean eſtate; in proſperity and confluence of riches, to bear them without pride, luxury and inſolence, is as difficult, as to bear a mean eſtate without murmuring, fretting and repining: wherefore it concerns us both in proſperity and adverſity to learn this excellent leſſon of Contentation.

1. We muſt be content in proſperity.

1. We muſt be content in proſperity.

Object. But it will be objected, who will not be content with a proſperous eſtate?

Anſw. For anſwer there are many, who notwithſtanding

ſtanding they have abundance of riches and honours in this world, yet they enjoy not themſelves, but are very ſtrangers to this leſſon of Contentment: for the great ſhare they have of outward things, they vex and torment themſelves more by caſting about, and projecting how to add to their eſtates and improve their revenues, and advance themſelves and their poſterity to high promotions: ſo that frequently it comes to paſs, that a day-labourer who hath not a peny, but what he earns and enjoys, onely enough to keep him alive from hand to mouth, he (I ſay) lives more contentedly, ſleeps more ſweetly, eats (though courſe diet) more heartily, then many great perſonages whoſe revenues are of ſeveral thouſands *per annum*: wherefore it is the duty of all ſuch who are in a proſperous condition in the world, to be thankful for the mercies they enjoy, and to honour God with their ſubſtance in doing good, and in diſtributing to the neceſſities of ſuch as are in want, and in the height of their riches to labour for a quiet, fixed and compoſed frame of ſpirit.

2. Let us be contented in adverſity. Now is the time of trial, amidſt varieties of loſſes, croſſes, poverty and diſappointments, to bear up the ſpirit with patience and learn the leſſon of contentment. An even ſedate frame

2 We muſt be content in adverſity.

frame of ſpirit amidſt variety of diſpenſations, will much conduce to the learning of this choice art of Contentment: for he that can moderate and bound himſelf in days of proſperity, and not ſurfet of the ſweetneſs thereof, he will be the better inabled to bear the bitterneſs of adverſity. A heart fixed, truſting in God, hath made a good proficiency in this even frame and ſettled temper of ſpirit: this man fears no bad news, for his heart is above them. The Pſalmiſt gives him this character, *Pſal.* 112. 7. *He ſhall not be afraid of evil tidings, his heart is fixed truſting in the Lord.* It is an obſervable ſaying of the Orator, *Praclara eſt æquabilitas in omni vita, & idem ſemper vultus eadémque frons.* Many trials we muſt expect and prepare for: becauſe afflictions are the common lot of Gods people, and *we muſt through many tribulations enter into the kingdom of God.* Wherefore the duty incumbent on us is this, *That no man ſhould be moved by theſe afflictions, for your ſelves know that we are appointed thereunto.* How many and manifold are the afflictions that befall mens eſtates: many have ſuſtained great loſſes by fire, being burnt out of houſe and home: many are impoveriſhed by the rot of cattel, others are undone by decay of trade, others have been undone by perfidious careleſs ſervants, and many have been

Cic. Offic.

Act. 14. 22.

1 Theſſ. 3. 3.

been great ſufferers in times of war, being ſpoiled of their goods by rapine and violence, and others have been much loſers by high-way robbers, ſo that many of conſiderable eſtates before, are reduced to poverty, and may take up the complaint of *Naomi, Call me not Naomi, call me Marah; for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me, I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home empty again, why then call ye me Naomi, ſeeing the Lord hath teſtified againſt me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?* Ruth 1. 20, 21. Times of affliction are times of trial, and read unto us neceſſary and ſerviceable lectures of contentment. Many ſore afflictions befall our bodies: and ſome are troubled with variety of diſeaſes. Every one meets with one diſeaſe or other, as an alarm to warn him of the frailty and ſhort continuance of his life upon earth. When the ſtone, ſtrangury, cholick, gout, tooth-ach, feavers, and ſuch other like diſtempers rage in their extremity, then patience, meekneſs and contentedneſs afford great help and aſſiſtance to bear thoſe burdens with more facility; for hereby the diſeaſe is more mitigated and leſs painful. But on the contrary, raging, fretting and vexing under pains and anguiſh adds more fuel to the flame, and in ſtead of leſſening aggravates the grief more and more. But of all griefs and

ſorrows none are ſo ſad and painful as inward wounds, ſuch as are wounds of conſcience. Prov. 18. 4. *The ſpirit of a man will ſuſtain his infirmities, but a wounded ſpirit who can bear?* Such a time eſpecially (when the arrows of the Almighty ſtick faſt in a man, and an awakened conſcience cries loud againſt the ſinner) not excluding other times, requires the exerciſe of faith and patience, and ſetting of the ſpirit of prayer on working, and reſigning of our wills to the will of God in every thing. The duty incumbent on us is fully expreſs'd, *Iſai.* 50. 10. *Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that walketh in darkneſs and hath no light, let him truſt in the name of the Lord, and ſtay upon his God.* Although for the preſent, God may reſpite an anſwer of peace to his own children, yet his deferring is no denial. He will ſpeak peace in his own appointed time: after he hath prepared and ſeaſoned his people for the reception of ſo great a mercy, he will ſend it them, *Pſal.* 85. 8. *I will hear what God the Lord will ſpeak; for he will ſpeak peace unto his people, and to his ſaints; but let them not turn again to folly.* Though God may hide his face from his own people for a time, and his hiding may cauſe much grief and trouble to them, yet in his good time, he will lift up the light of his countenance upon them. Our duty then is, to watch and pray,

pray, and act faith on promiſes, and quietly and ſubmiſſively yeeld up our wills to the will of God. Although at preſent there be no dawning of comfort, yet a clear ſunſhine will break forth. Let us then make particular application of theſe Scripture cordials, *Pſal.* 97. 11. *Light is ſown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart.* There is ſome conſiderable interval of time between ſeed time and harveſt, wherefore as the husbandman muſt wait patiently for the appointed time of harveſt, ſo muſt a true beleever wait Gods appointed time. Light and gladneſs are ſown, true beleevers ſhall reap the benefit thereof in Gods own convenient time. Another Scripture cordial is *Pſal.* 112. 4. *Unto the upright there ariſeth light in darkneſs.* O Chriſtian, labour for uprightneſs, (*i. e.*) ſincerity, and aſſure thy ſelf, that the light of Gods countenance will diſpell thy darkneſs, and his conſolations will cheer up and revive thy ſpirit abundantly.

Sect. 3.

Containing four ſigns and Characters of Contentment.

I Proceed to a third enquiry, what ſigns and characters may be given, whether we have learned this excellent art of Contentment, 3. Enquiry, what be the ſigns of contentment.

tentment, yea or no? For ſatisfaction to this enquiry, I ſhall ſet down certain σημεῖα, or diſtinguiſhing ſigns, which diſcover a great difference between contented and diſcontented perſons, as I ſhall repreſent unto you in theſe enſuing particulars.

1. A contented perſon is a charitable perſon.

1. A contented perſon is a charitable perſon, open-handed, large-hearted and liberal. As God hath given him a competent ſhare of this worlds goods, ſo he communicates and diſtributes them to the ſupply of ſuch as are in a neceſſitous condition. He looks upon himſelf as a ſteward in truſt, and therefore ingaged to diſpence to others that are in need, in feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, viſiting the impriſoned and relieving the diſtreſſed. God hath made as well the poor as rich: and the rich ought to open their hands and hearts for the relieving of the poor. The commands are very many to this purpoſe; onely I ſhall inſtance in two or three, one command is, *Eccleſ.* 11. 1, 2. *Caſt thy bread upon the waters, and thou ſhalt find it after many days.* In our old Engliſh tranſlation it is read, *Caſt thy bread upon wet faces*; implying, that the poor mans miſery cauſeth him to weep. Now charity beſtowed upon the poor is not loſt; it is like ſeed ſown, wch will bring forth a plentiful harveſt. But ſome may complain of the times, and may fear that they them-

themſelves may want. But this thought muſt not hinder charity. For v. 2. it is ſaid, *Give a portion to ſeven and alſo to eight, for thou knoweſt not what evil ſhall be upon the earth.* There is a certain definite number uſed for an uncertain and indefinite, implying the great extent of charity, that many ought to be made partakers of it. And though evils are foreſeen, and feared, yet whileſt we have this worlds goods, we ſhould take the preſent opportunity of doing good with them. Another command is, 1 *Tim.* 6. 17, 18. *Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor truſt in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate.* In this Scripture are many choice things obſervable, 1. There is a word of command, παραγγελε: it is a judicial term taken from charges at Aſſizes given by Judges: they give their charge as they receive it from the rule of the law, and ſo the Apoſtles gave their charges and word of command, as they received it from Jeſus Chriſt. 2. To whom is this command given? I anſwer, it is *to them that are rich in this world*, ſuch as have the affluence of worldly goods, as gold and ſilver, corn, lands and revenues: Such as have abundance of the good things of this life are

1.

Mandatum ab alio acceptum aliquibus denunciare, Zanch.

not to hoard them up, but to distribute and do good. 3. Observe two obstacles or impediments, which must be avoided.

1. High-mindedness hinders good works.

The first is high-mindedness, μὴ ὑψηλοφρονεῖν: this is a grand impediment; it is all one with pride of heart, and it obstructs the practice of charity: for proud persons grasp all they can, and think all they have too little to satisfie their pride: and hence it comes to pass, that many will bestow many pounds in gorgeous apparel, and care not what they expend upon ridiculous and exotick garbs and fashions, and in the mean time they grumble at a few pence ask'd of them towards the relief of such, as are in extreme poverty.

2. Worldly confidence hinders good works.

A second impediment is worldly confidence, it is express'd, *not trust in uncertain riches*: for confidence in riches, trusting and relying upon them hinder all acts of charity. The words are emphatical, μηδὲ ἠλπικέναι ὅτι πλούτου ἀδηλότητι: Who of any understanding would trust in uncertainties? But here is positively set down in whom trust ought to be reposed, it is said in the living God. Riches they perish, the owners die, but God lives for ever, and to trust in God here is a strong ground of encouragement in the subsequent words, *who gives us richly all things*

Neque spem ponere in divitiis incertis: Hypallage Hebraica pro ἐπὶ πλούτῳ ἀδηλότητος, & hoc pro ἐπὶ πλούτῳ ἀδήλῳ. Dugards Lexicon.

things to enjoy. Therefore we muſt alienate our hope and truſt from all earthly things, which fade, decay and wither, and place our whole hope and confidence in the living God. Now the particular acts of charity are expreſſed in four particulars. 1. To *do good*, ἀγαθοεργεῖν, and this implies liberality and beneficence. Not onely a bare doing of good, but in a bountiful manner. 2. To be *rich in good works*: not onely a doing good, but doing good in a plentiful manner is commanded. A niggardly giving for a rich man is here forbidden. 3. That they be *ready to diſtribute*, here is ſet forth a ready propenſion of the mind. 4. That they be *willing to communicate.* This is exegetical of the former; diſtributing and communicating are acts of charity. And ſuch as exerciſe theſe duties ſhall reap the comfortable fruit thereof. 1 *Tim.* 6. 19. *Laying up in ſtore for themſelves a good foundation againſt the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.* From this Scripture Papiſts plead for merit, and *Eſtius* cauſeleſly blames *Calvin*, (as uſually Papiſts do) for ſaying (and that orthodoxly) *That reward depends not on merit, but on Gods free acceptance.* To this Scripture I will add one other, which may give

Quò quiſque opibus abundat, eò amplior illi beneficentiæ materia ſuppetit, & quò ſemper ad erogandum pigriores ſumus quàm deceat, eò pluribus verbis eam virtutem commendat. Calv.

Romanenſium ex meriti ratione pendet, ſed ex liberali Dei acceptione. Calv.

light to this, viz. *Hebr.* 13. 16. *But to do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.* So that here is neither merit in the work, nor in the worker, but it is Gods acceptance we must onely plead. For by what hath been mentioned appears, that acts of charity and contentedness of spirit joyn together in a mutual harmony. Let none therefore imagine, that by a prudent and liberal distribution of his goods to the necessity of others, that he shall be any whit a loser: for God himself will be his paymaster, *Prov.* 19. 17. *He that hath pity on the poor lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given, will he pay him again.* An open-handed man that is considerately charitable (for indiscreet charity is culpable) is a blessed man, *Psal.* 41. 1, 2. *Blessed is he that considereth the poor, the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.* When contentment and godliness go hand in hand, then charity puts forth it self. For in testimony of thankfulness, a good man abounding in riches will abound in acts of charity, and disperse to the poor with a cheerful and willing mind, *Psal.* 112. 9. *He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor, his righteousness endureth for ever.* The fear of want and rolling disturbing thoughts cause many to be so niggardly and close-fisted: But a man of a contented mind is industri-

ous

ous in his calling, thankful for what he hath, and therefore fears no want; but he exerciſeth with all cheerfulneſs acts of charity, and improveth the preſent ſeaſon, making his own eyes his overſeers, and his own hands his executours: for by doing good in his life time, he may to his comfort behold the good ſucceſs of his charity, and likewiſe enjoy the benefit of the fervent and powerful prayers of many, who have fared the better by him, and whoſe loyns do bleſs him. Now a ready way to evidence the truth of our religion is to exerciſe works of mercy and compaſſion towards ſuch as are in want. Let not rich perſons be afraid, that they ſhall miſcarry in their liberality, for we read, *Prov.* 11. 25. *The liberal ſoul ſhall be made fat, and he that watereth ſhall be watered alſo himſelf.* Iſai. 32. 8. *But the liberal deviſeth liberal things, and by liberal things ſhall he ſtand.*

But the queſtion will be ask'd how far charity is to be extended? *Queſt.*

For anſwer, our Saviour propounds God the Fathers example, *Luke* 6. 31, 36. *He is kind unto the unthankful and the evil. Be ye therefore merciful as your Father alſo is merciful.* Sometimes we ſhould give to one who is in diſtreſs, though a vile man, *quà homini, & ſi non homini tamen humanitati.* *Anſw.*

The

The Apoſtle commands the enlargement of charity, yet he appropriates it to ſome more then others in an eſpecial manner, *Gal.* 6. 10. *As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, eſpecially unto them, who are of the houſhold of faith.* And the practice of charitable acts is a character of pure religion, *James* 1. 27. *Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, to viſit the fatherleſs and widows in their affliction, and to keep himſelf unſpotted from the world.*

2. A contented man is moderate in his deſires after the world.

A ſecond ſigne of a contented man is this, when he is ſober and moderate in his deſires after the things of the world. Although all the lands and revenues, and whatever he poſſeſſeth are his own proper goods, and he is diligent to improve them, yet he orders all his affairs with moderation: as that man is blame-worthy, who is greedy and eager in the purſuit after another mans eſtate; ſo is he to be blamed, who is over eager and ſolicitous for recovering of his own right. For inſtance, If a tenant have his barns fired by lightning, and his corn burnt up, or multitude of his cattel die of the rot (notwithſtanding the rigour of the law requires exact performance of covenants, yet) the landlord is obliged in conſcience to ſhew mercy and compaſſion. There are caſes of neceſſity and charity, by reaſon

reaſon of emergent caſualties, wherein a man may and ought *cedere de ſuo jure.* For a man in every thing to require the ἀκριβοδίκαιον, to be ſtrickt and punctual, as not to abate a peny, in caſe of poverty, loſſes and ſickneſs, and ſuch like caſes, this is to be righteous over-much, which *Solomon* prohibits, *Eccleſ.* 7. 16. *Be not righteous over-much, neither make thy ſelf over-wiſe, why ſhouldeſt thou deſtroy thy ſelf?* Our common Proverb gives ſome light to this Scripture, viz. *Right in extremity is the greateſt injury.* Our duty is to moderate our zeal with prudence, and temper all acts of juſtice with moderation. *Tacitus* in the life of *Agricola* ſaith, *that he retained* (that which is moſt difficult) *a moderation in wiſdom; He is wiſe that is not over-wiſe.* Such then, who are too ſtrict and greedy in exacting every peny to the utmoſt (though it be their own) without any conſideration of emergent loſſes by the hand of God, do plainly diſcover themſelves to be without bowels of compaſſion, and perſons of covetous and diſcontented ſpirits.

Summum jus, ſumma injuria.

Retinuit quod eſt difficillimum ex ſapientia modum. Quiſquis plus juſto non ſapit, ille ſapit. Tacitus in vita Agric.

3. Another ſigne of contentment is this, when a man who formerly enjoyed a plentiful eſtate, but by loſſes either at

3. He is a contented man who amidſt great loſſes, patiently and quietly ſubmits unto the hand of God.

at sea or at home, or variety of casualties is reduced to a mean condition; yet this man looks at and acknowledgeth the hand of God, and without fretting or murmuring, and without reviling of second causes, he patiently and submissively undergoes his sufferings and losses. When a man can part with that which God hath given him, and quietly resigne that to God which he hath received from God, this shews much of a contented and patient spirit. Though many have their houses burnt and their goods consumed in the flames, yet there is great mercy in that they escaped with their lives, and the acting of thankfulness for so great a deliverance as this, should silence all murmuring for the loss of the other. We should in deliberate thoughts all consider, that all that we have and hold is in trust from God, our great Lord and Creditour. The title, propriety and interest of all we are or have are in God alone; we onely are stewards, or *usu-fructuarii*. That God hath lent any of us an estate so long, is a great testimony of his bounty, and a great obligation to engage us to thankfulness; wherefore we must not think hardly of God, nor murmure at God, for calling for his own again. For God is the absolute Sovereign Lord and Owner of all; we are onely tenants at his will and pleasure. God is our Master,

Maſter, we are his ſtewards and engaged to give an account, for all that which is committed to our truſt. *Job* is a pattern of patience, chap. 1. 21. *The Lord gave* (ſaith he) *and the Lord hath taken away, bleſſed be the name of the Lord.* And when his wife gave him a croſs anſwer, and wicked counſel, he returns a wiſe anſwer, *Job* 2. 10. *Thou ſpeakeſt as one of the fooliſh women ſpeaketh; what ſhall we receive good at the hand of God, and ſhall we not receive evil?* He is a very bad debter, who grumbles and falls out with his creditour when he calls for his own. It oftentimes ſo falls out that the lender who in kindneſs hath lent a conſiderable ſum of money, when he calls for it again, he loſeth a friend of the borrower: but this is a high piece of ingratitude, to be utterly abhorred. But he is a ſober and ſettled ſpirited man, and hath learned the leſſon of contentment, who is willing to reſigne that up to God which he hath received from God. If he loſeth an eſtate by fire, robbery, decay of trading, ſhipwrack, *&c.* he looks at the higheſt hand and cheerfully ſubmits. He ſaid well who uſed this expreſſion, *Non contriſtor quia recepiſti, ſed ago gratias quòd dediſti.* Whenever then loſſes, poverty or affliction befall us, when we are deprived of that which formerly we enjoyed, we muſt exerciſe two graces, *viz.*

patience

patience in ſubmitting to Gods will, both for the preſent and future; and thankfulneſs for that eſtate which we have enjoyed ſo long; and patience and thankfulneſs are grand evidences of contentation.

4. A contented man takes juſt and regular courſes.

A fourth ſigne (and the laſt I ſhall name) of Contentment is this, that a contented man takes juſt and regular courſes, both in getting an eſtate, and keeping it when it is got. In both he acts regularly, not according to any law of his own luſts, but according to the unerring rule of the Word of God. *Solomon* preſcribes ſeveral irrefragable principles, which may be called *Propoſitiones æternæ veritatis.* One is *Prov.* 16. 8. *Better is a little with righteouſneſs, then great revenues without right.* A ſecond principle is, *Prov.* 10. 2. *Treaſures of wickedneſs profit nothing, but righteouſneſs delivereth from death.* A third principle is, *Prov.* 15. 16. *Better is little with the fear of the Lord, then great treaſures and trouble therewith.* A fourth principle is, *Prov.* 20. 17. *Bread of deceit is ſweet to a man, but afterward his mouth ſhall be filled with gravel.* A fifth principle is, *Prov.* 20. 21. *An inheritance may be gotten haſtily at the beginning, but the end thereof ſhall not be bleſſed.* A ſixth (to name no more) principle is, *Prov.* 9. 17, 18. *Stoln waters are ſweet, and bread eaten*

eaten in ſecret is pleaſant, but he knoweth not that the dead are there, and that her gueſts are in the depths of hell. Theſe are ſelect aphoriſms and experienced principles delivered by *Solomon*: who then of any underſtanding dare adventure to advance an eſtate by bribery, forgery, extortion, ſacriledge, *&c?* The gold called *Aurum Tholoſanum*, made every one the poorer that had it. And a coal with a piece of fleſh, which an eagle took from the altar, ſet her neſt on fire. It is commonly obſerved that eagles feathers will not mix with any other feathers. Men of ſerious and conſcientious ſpirits, will not ſuffer any goods unjuſtly gotten to mingle with their eſtates. *Solomon* tells us, *Dead flies cauſe the ointment of the apothecary to ſend forth a ſtinking ſavour.* One wild gourd ſhred in with other herbs, ſpoiled a whole meſs of pottage: ſo any eſtate gotten by unjuſt ways, mingled with the reſt, will bring a curſe upon the whole. It argueth queſtionleſs a mal-contented ſpirit, when men make haſte to be rich, and run on in the eager purſuit of unjuſt practices and crafty devices, to over-reach and go beyond their brethren, ſo that they may gain by others loſſes, and lay their foundation and build upon others ruines. But ſuch vile practices prove the ruine of the practitioners. Whereas a contented ſingle-hearted

Eccleſ. 10. 1.

hearted man keeps on his calling with all faithfulneſs, and accounts no ways gainful and beneficial, but ſuch onely which are juſt and honeſt. A heathen, one of the eloquenteſt of them all could ſay, *That which is not honeſt is not to be accounted profitable.* Whatever imaginary gain the world boaſts of is not to be valued, onely true gain is purchaſed by honeſt and true ways.

Quod non eſt honeſtum illud non eſt utile cenſendum. Cic. Offic.

Chap. 6.

CHAP. VI.

Containing an uſe of Exhortation, which is preſſed home by ſix moving conſiderations, to perſwade to Contentment.

Sect. 1.

Containing three Motives to Contentment.

Uſe 3. For exhortation.

I Proceed to a third uſe, which is for exhortation to perſwade to the daily exercise and practice of this great duty of Contentment. The art of contentment (as I mentioned before) is a myſtery, and therefore in it there is ſome more then ordinary excellency to be underſtood. The duty incumbent on us is to be well inſtructed in this

this myſtery. It is a divine art, we muſt labour to be good proficients, and experienced ſcholars in it. Therefore to excite and perſwade to the learning and practiſing of this choice art (well worth our learning) of contentment, I ſhall lay down theſe ſix moving and weighty conſiderations.

1. Conſider what we brought with us into the world, and what we ſhall carry out of it. The Apoſtle informs us of a meer nullity, both of the one condition and the other, 1 *Tim.* 6. 7. *For we brought nothing into the world, and it is certain, we can carry nothing out.* *Job* amidſt his great afflictions confeſſeth, *Job* 1. 21. *Naked came I out of my mothers womb, and naked ſhall I return thither.* None of us all brought into the world mannours, lordſhips, or bags of gold and ſilver; neither ſhall we carry out of the world any ſuch things with us. That great Perſonage, who could not be contented with the whole world, but whin'd becauſe there was not another world to conquer, yet when he was dead, he was confined to a grave ſix or ſeven foot long. A little compaſs of earth will hold that man when dead, whom in his life time, many miles riding would not content. If then we conſider ſeriouſly how naked we all came into the

1 *Conſid.* We brought nothing with us into this world, and ſhall carry nothing out.

Pellæo Juvenі non unus ſufficit orbis.

preſent world, without furniture or proviſion, either of food or raiment, and when we go out of the world, we ſhall be diveſted and ſtript of all our poſſeſſions, this weighty conſideration ſeriouſly ſet home upon our hearts, ſhould read us an uſeful lecture of contentment. A ſmall little pittance will ſuffice nature, and keep us alive in this preſent world, and carry us through it. And where grace is wrought effectually upon the heart, leſs will ſuffice; for grace will moderate the affections, and bridle the appetite, and ſo order the whole man into a quiet and ſweet frame, inſomuch as whatever we have (be it leſs or more) we ſhall with comfort and ſerenity of mind enjoy the ſame.

Paucis minimiſque natura contenta eſt, cujus ſatietatem ſi ſuperfluis urgere velis, aut injucundum quod infuderis fiet, aut noxium. Boeth. de Conſol. phil. lib. 2.

2. *Conſid.* That our great comforts, joys, hopes and treaſures, conſiſt not in the fruition of outward things.

2. Conſider that our great comforts, joys, hopes and treaſures, are not in the fruition of outward things; but our beſt reverſion and our greateſt ſatisfaction is to be had in heaven, and in the great things of eternity. Why then ſhould we take up our thoughts and immoderately perplex and intangle our ſpirits with an over-eager ſolicitude for the things of the preſent world? Upon an exact ſurvey, there will be found an impotency and inſufficiency in all things under the Sun, to quiet and ſatisfie the immortal

immortal ſoul of man. For the heart of man is triangular, and the world is circular, and it is impoſſible for a circle to fill a triangle. If we look for reſt in this preſent world, we look for it where it is not to be had; *For here is not our reſt.* If we look for an abiding city here, we miſtake the place: It is not to be had in this world, onely in the world to come: ſo ſaith the Apoſtle, *For here we have no continuing city, but we ſeek one to come.* If we expect any ſatisfaction from earthly treaſures, we ſhall be diſappointed in our expectations; for they are all ſubject to variety of caſualties. Let us then take counſel from Chriſt, *Matth. 6. 19, 20. Lay not up for your ſelves treaſures upon earth, where moth and ruſt doth corrupt, and where theeves break through and ſteal: But lay up for your ſelves treaſures in heaven, where moth nor ruſt doth corrupt, and where theeves do not break through and ſteal.* Let us account Chriſt our chiefeſt treaſure, and let us be willing to part with all treaſures for Chriſt. Chriſt is infinitely more valuable then all the treaſures in the univerſe. He is the pearl of price; We muſt imitate the wiſe merchant, *who when he had found one pearl of great price, he went and ſold all that he had and bought it.* If then we have got poſſeſſion of Chriſt, we are rich enough. *In him are hid all the treaſures*

Micah 2. 10.

Hebr. 13. 14.

Matth. 13. 46.

Col 2. 3. *ſures of wiſdom and knowledge.* The know-
O Theſauris omnibus opulentior notitia Chriſti! ledge of Chriſt is richer then all treaſures whatſoever, (as an ancient Father obſerves.) A traveller in his journey meets with variety of hardſhips and ſufferings; he meets with many a ſhower of rain, courſe fare, hard lodging, and many times falls into vile company, from whom he receives affronts and abuſes; but he in the mean time comforts himſelf with hopes of better uſage at home, (for *home* though homely will make amends for all.) What is this world but an Inn and thorow-fare to eternity? Heaven is the home of a true beleever, that's his journeys end; and there (as *Job* ſpeaks)

Job 3. 17. *The wicked ceaſe from troubling, and there the weary be at reſt.* Would you not think that traveller to be a mad-man, when at his Inn (where he is to lie but for one night onely) he calls for all the pots and pans, candleſticks, bedſteads, and all the lumber of the houſe to be brought into his chamber: juſt ſo is he whoſe continuance is to be very ſhort in the world, and but for a moment of time, and yet he doth ſo turmoil, encumber and involve himſelf with ſo much pelf and luggage of the world, and graſps ſuch large handfuls of earthly treaſures, as if he had no other thoughts but of fixing his ſtation, and ſettling himſelf here below, as if he dream'd of an eternity upon earth.

earth. But a child of God looks upon himself as a stranger and a pilgrim; and he accounts these outward things as transient, fading and perishing things. He hath his eye fixed on heaven, that is his countrey, and he can cheerfully bear with hardships in his way, whilest he is travelling to his countrey. So did those beleevers *desire a better countrey, that is an heavenly.* Hebr. 11. 16. So did *Moses* eye the *recompence of the reward.* The words are emphatical. Something *Moses* look'd from, he look'd off them, as one that altogether forsook them, and would have no more to do with them; and what were those things you may read, *Heb.* 11. 25. They were the *pleasures of sin*; and *Moses* made the better choice, *Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, then to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.* The Apostle look'd from them, and regarded not a whit any sinful pleasures, but there is something (which abundantly satisfied him) that he look'd unto, and that is *the recompence of the reward.* The serious contemplation of heaven and the great things of eternity, will quiet our spirits, and make them be contented with lesser matters here below, considering that there is reserved a brave reversion in heaven for us.

Ἀπέβλεπε γὰρ εἰς τὴν μισθαποδοσίαν, Hebr. 11. 26.

3. Consider that this mystery of divine Contentment is an excellent and sublime

3. *Consid.* That the mystery of

divine contentment is an excellent myſtery.

myſtery. It is well worth the learning of the profoundeſt ſcholar, and this art is ſo excellent and honourable, as whoſoever he be that learns it, gains high honour, credit and reputation by it. It is no diſparagement in the leaſt (but a means to obtain high renown and honour) even for the moſt learned Rabbies and men of greateſt knowledge, to go with St *Paul* to ſchool, to learn this great leſſon of divine Contentment. This great Doctour of the Gentiles, a profound and every way accompliſhed ſcholar, the chiefeſt of the Apoſtles for acquired parts and endowments, made it his grand ſtudy and buſineſs, to learn to be contented in every eſtate and condition. Let us go and do likewiſe, and learn of the Apoſtle that which he firſt learned of Chriſt, and that is the excellent art of Contentment. I have often in this Treatiſe given to contentment this epithet of *excellent*, and I call it ſo the rather, becauſe it reſembles God. The word is αὐτάρκης *ſelf-ſufficient*, *Phil.* 4. 11. There it is in the concrete; but it is in the abſtract, 1 *Tim.* 6. 6. αὐτάρκεια *ſelf-ſufficiency*. Contentment, or ſelf-ſufficiency (as the word ſignifies) can be appropriated unto none but God; For he onely is αὐτάρκης (*i. e.*) primarily and abſolutely *ſelf-ſufficient*: But St *Paul* and others may be ſaid to be ſo ſecondarily and derivatively.

Αὐτάρκεια.

Whoever

Whoever he be, that desires and endeavours to be thus content and self-sufficient, he must beg it of God, and whosoever hath obtained this jewel, he must ascribe to God the praise and glory of so rich a treasure, and precious commodity.

So then the excellency of Contentment consists in four particulars.

1. It resembles God. There is a similitude or assimilation unto God, so far as the measure of a creature will contain. By self-sufficiency (here rendred contentment) there is a similitude unto God himself. God alone is self-sufficient, and the more beauty and excellency is put upon any creature, by so much the more it resembles the Creatour. 1 Contentment and self-sufficiency resembles God.

2. God is the sole Donour of contentment. God is the original, exact and perfect pattern. And the more holy we are, by how much the more we conform to our original. This gift of contentment is one of the *good and perfect gifts which come down from God.* This is that which the Preacher so highly commends, *That every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God.* God gives us our *beloved sleep.* God alone can quiet and settle our spirits; so that we can never rest satisfied, nor enjoy any acqui- 2. God is the sole Donour of Contentment. James 1. 17. Eccles. 3. 13. Psal. 127. 2.

escence, but in God alone. Hereupon St *Austin* in that rare book of his Confessions gives this experimental verdict, *That whereever the soul of man turns it self, it is fastned to sorrows any where besides God.* And in another place, the same Authour adds further, viz. *In all things which I run through, I find no place of safety for my soul but in thee, in whom all that is scattered in me is gathered together, neither can any thing come from me without thee.* God then is the onely centre of our rest. He can quiet and compose our spirits, and this is his work alone. Thus then the excellency of Contentment is discovered, because it resembles God, and it is the gift of God.

Quaquaversum se verterit anima hominis, ad dolores figitur alibi, praeterquam in te. Aug. Confess. lib. 4. cap. 10.

In omnibus quae percurro, non invenio tutum locum animae meae, nisi in te, quo colligantur sparsa mea, nec nisi à te, quicquam recedat ex me. Aug. Confess. lib. 10. cap. 40.

3. It is difficult to attain unto this art of contentment.

3. Add hereunto a third thing to set forth the excellency of Contentment, and this is drawn from the difficulty to attain it. We usually say that such things which are excellent, are hardly come by. Precious jewels and pearls of great value, are not easily compassed; there is required great pains and industry to get precious commodities; for pearls, many dive into the *Indian* ocean; many climb up dangerous rocks

Δύσκολα τὰ καλά.

rocks, for getting of precious ſtones: how many travel many a weary ſtep to purchaſe gold and ſilver, and how great pains do they take in digging and ſweating in the mines.

Non niſi ſublato reperitur gemmula ſaxo.

Every one underſtands not what worth is in a jewel, neither will every one be at any pains to ſeek for it: but after pains and diligence are uſed, and the pearl is poſſeſſed, it will make amends for all the labour. This contentment is a rare and precious jewel, difficult to get; but more worth then all the labour that is beſtowed in getting of it. There muſt be working, ſweating, faſting and praying: faith and patience muſt be exerciſed; but when once we are owners of this rich treaſure, the difficulty and labour in getting will ſweeten the fruition, and inhance the eſtimation thereof. For the more pains we have conferred to get this excellent jewel of contentment, the greater comfort we ſhall perceive in the fruition thereof.

A fourth and laſt excellency of Contentment I ſhall mention is this; That herein conſiſts the excellency of a contented ſpirit, that it receives ſatisfaction, and apprehends it ſelf ſatisfied, and thereupon takes delight and complacency. In this reſpect a man

4. There is ſatisfaction and complacency in contentedneſs.

a man of a contented mind is richer then many great and noble Perſonages; for they are not contented with a great deal, the other is contented with a little. It is not within the ſphere of any thing under the Sun, whether riches, honours, pleaſures, friendſhips, *&c.* to afford any real and ſolid ſatisfaction to an immortal ſoul. Still there is one thing or other defective, ſtill there is obſerved one or other bitter pill, that ſowrs all our enjoyments in this preſent world. The eye is not ſatisfied with ſeeing gaudy pageants; neither is the ear ſatisfied with hearing the moſt melodious muſick; neither is the heart ſatisfied with plotting, projecting and contriving high things in this world. But when God is pleaſed to vouchſafe contentment and ſettlement of heart, then there is abundance of ſatisfaction. *Antiſthenes* an heathen Philoſopher deſired a great boon of the heathen Gods, which was, that they would give him the ſpirit of *Socrates*. Now *Socrates* was a man of ſuch an even and conſtant frame of ſpirit, that he was one and the ſelf-ſame man, and no way diſcontented, or diſcompoſed in his ſpirit amidſt viciſſitudes of affairs. It is *Seneca*'s commendation of a good man, *to be one and the ſame in all conditions*. Thus much we may learn from heathens themſelves, that there is a great and excellent vertue

Vir bonus eſt ſemper idem, & in omni actu par ſibi. Sen.

vertue in a contented mind. But (as I formerly mentioned) I lay this down for a propoſition of eternal truth: *That the art of divine Contentment cannot be learned ſufficiently in the ſchools of Philoſophers; but onely in the ſchool of Chriſt.* For he alone can teach us this choice leſſon, and make us willing to learn it. Wherefore that we may obtain true and real ſatisfaction, let us go to God for it, and make our applications to the throne of grace. Let us pray with *Moſes* the man of God, *Pſal.* 90. 14. *O ſatisfie us early with thy mercy, that we may rejoyce and be glad all our days.* And let us as *Philip* did ask that grand queſtion, of abſolute neceſſity to be known, *John* 14. 8. *Philip ſaith unto him, Lord, ſhew us the Father, and it ſufficeth us.* No ſatisfaction, no contentment can be found, but in God alone. If we look for contentment in worldly things, we ſeek *for the living amongſt the dead.* If we expect ſatisfaction in creatures, we ſhall meet with diſappointments, and by experience find an inſufficiency and deficiency in creatures, and an inability to anſwer the deſires of our hearts.

Sect.

Sect. 2.

Containing a fourth and fifth Motive to Contentment.

4. *Consid.* The art of Contentment is an exceeding enriching and gainful art.

I Proceed to a fourth moving consideration, which is, that the art of Contentment is an exceeding enriching and gainful art: it is a thriving and advantageous employment; he that drives this trade, takes a ready way to thrive, and be a great gainer. However a man hath an indifferent estate, and low in comparison of many others; yet if he can enjoy what he hath contentedly, and keeps up a quiet settled mind, he is a great gainer, not onely for the present, but for the future.

1. A contented man is a gainer for the present.

1. For the present, a contented man is a gainer: for he is so well pleased with his present condition, that he enjoys great serenity and calmness in his spirit. Though boisterous and swelling waves roar and toss him up and down, and exceedingly afflict the outward man; yet as to his inward man, he enjoys a marvellous tranquillity and quietness. Though storms and tempests, and one affliction follows upon the neck of another, as one wave of the sea followeth another; yet a man of a composed spirit comfortably passeth through all; for neither prosperity puffs him up, neither doth adversity

Felix ille quem nec fortuita attollunt, nec adversa deprimunt. Sen.

verſity caſt him down. And in the obſervation of the eloquent Oratour, *It is the property of a ſtrong and conſtant mind, not to be diſturbed in rough paſſages; nor tumultuouſly to be caſt down from his degree and condition.* A man of this choice frame of ſpirit is a great gainer, even in variety of diſpenſations; for what he hath, he enjoys with comfort. Whereas many, who have vaſt revenues, yet enjoy them not to contentment and ſatisfaction; ſome diſcontent or other ariſeth and imbitters all; though they may be accounted rich in the worlds eſteem, yet for want of a contented mind, they are very poor and beggarly: but a good man, who makes God his portion, and accounts him his treaſure, is exceeding rich and always in a thriving way, notwithſtanding loſſes and croſſes intervene: for he hath great cauſe of contentment, both from above him, and from within him.

Fortis animi & conſtantis eſt, non perturbari in rebus aſperis, nec tumultuantem de gradu dejici. Cic. Offic.

Honeſta res eſt læta paupertas, illa verò non eſt paupertas ſi læta eſt. Cui enim cum paupertate bene convenit, dives eſt. Sen.

1. From above him, he hath great cauſe of contentment, becauſe he hath intereſt in precious promiſes, in the covenant of grace, in Gods ſpecial providences, and in the redemption and interceſſion of Chriſt. Upon theſe grounds, he raiſeth to himſelf abundance

1. A good man hath cauſe of contentment from above him.

abundance of contentment. And though he meet with disappointments and failing in creatures, yet his God never fails, nor disappoints him. And though the cisterns be drawn dry, yet the fountain is always full: upon such considerations a good man receives great satisfaction, and labours to use the language of praise and thankfulness, and avoid all querulous and murmuring language.

2. A good man hath cause of contentedness from within him.

2. A good man hath cause of contentedness from within him, *Prov.* 14. 14. *A good man shall be satisfied from himself.* (*i. e.*) There are inward consolations arising from the testimony of Gods reconciled countenance, which will afford abundant satisfaction. The testimony of a good conscience is a soul-satisfying comforter. So then, though there be without storms and tempests, yet if there be a calm within, and notwithstanding outward troubles and vexations, yet if there be inward comforts, as peace of conscience, the light of Gods countenance, the apprehension of his love in Christ, all these will swallow up and devour all outward troubles and sorrows, as *Aaron*'s rod swallowed up and devoured the rods of the Magicians of *Ægypt*. And as a contented man is a gainer for the present, so

3. A contented man gains as to his future condition.

In the second place a contented man is a gainer as to his future condition: For he takes

takes a direct and ready way to thrive, and to improve his estate to the best advantage; whosoever is of such a composed and settled spirit, he can set upon any business, cheerfully, and prepare for variety of dispensations. However things go, he is a resolved man and thankful for all. It was an heroical speech of *Luther*, *Let the world be in prosperity, or let it be destroyed, yet I will bless God who made the world.* As the Ancients held the plow and prayed, so a man of this sweet and contented frame of spirit, manageth the duties of his calling with prayer, and faith in God: and to pray and be diligent in our calling, is the readiest way to thrive; so we may expect a blessing from heaven, *Prov.* 10. 4. *The hand of the diligent maketh rich.* Thus *Jabez* prayed for Gods blessing, and God answered his prayer, 1 Chron. 4. 10. *And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, O that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand may be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me: And God granted him that which he requested.* It is not an ordinary gain, but a great gain that accrues unto godly persons and contented persons. This then is the way to improve our estates to the best advantage, when we joyn godliness and contentment together. It is an argument

Felix si mundus, evertatur mundus, benedicam Domino qui fecit mundum. Luth.

Ἔστι δὲ πορισμὸς μέγας ἡ εὐσέβεια. 1 Tim. 6. 6.

ment drawn, *à bene conjunctis ad malè divisa*, we must joyn them together and make no separation.

5. *Consid.* The greatness of the mercies which we enjoy, and the meanness of those things which we want.

A fifth consideration to move us to contentment, shall be drawn; from the greatness of those mercies which we enjoy, and the meanness and emptiness of those things which we want. We who have interest in Christ have a right to all the promises, and covenant of grace. In Christ we have a strong title unto them. We are of the *church of the first-born*, and of the *household of faith, sons and daughters of God, heirs, and joynt heirs with Jesus Christ.* Now the serious consideration of our interest in these great things of eternity, may cause us to set a lower rate on these things of this present world. What is all the gold and silver, all the Eastern and Western treasures in comparison of heavenly things? They are no better then trash and vanity in comparison of those things which in heaven are reserved for all true beleevers. Let us compare the riches of Christ, his purchases of justification and sanctification, and glorification, with the honours, profits and pleasures of this present world, and we shall find that these transient and perishing things are not worthy to be compared with those durable things. We read that *Abraham* gave the sons of his concubines *gifts*, and sent

Hebr. 12. 23. Gal. 6. 10. 2 Cor. 6. 28. Rom. 8. 17.

ſent them away, but he gave the inheritance unto *Iſaac* the ſon of the promiſe: ſo God gives outward gifts, as riches and honours to the men of the world, but the inheritance of heaven he reſerveth for his children. There is a notable ſtory of two men, one called *Anthony*, and the other called *Didymus*; This *Didymus* was a man eminent for parts and graces, but he was blind: *Anthony* asked him if he was not troubled for want of his eye-ſight; yes (ſaith he) I am, but ſhall I be troubled for the want of that which even dogs have, and ſhall I not rejoyce and be thankful for that I enjoy, which Angels have? The application is obvious. A Chriſtian man thus expoſtulates with himſelf: Shall I be diſcontented and vex my ſelf for want of that which dogs have? They have bread and meat, and kennels to lodge in; and oft times the very dogs of ſome great Perſonages are fed with choicer food, and lie in better rooms then ſome good Chriſtians are accommodated withall: ſhall I not then be contented with that which makes Angels themſelves glorious? For this cauſe, the Apoſtle is exuberant in praiſes, *Eph.* 1. 3. *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath bleſſed us with all ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly places in Chriſt.* What then though a child of God hath not promotions in earthly pla-

ces, yet if he have assurance of Gods love in Christ, and an interest in heavenly places, this consideration should be an especial engagement to contentment. A poor beggar lying in a Church-porch, read a lecture of contentment to a rich man: The rich man being much discontented and tormented, went on purpose to discourse with a beggar lying in straw in a Church-porch: the rich man wisheth him a good morrow; he wondred what he meant; then (said he) I wish you a good day; Why, saith the beggar, do you wish me either good morrow or good day? for I never knew bad morrow, nor bad day in all my life, nor did I ever meet with one bad night. What is the reason said the rich man? The poor man answered, when I was in a rich estate, I prayed always that petition in the Lords Prayer, *Thy will be done*, and now being in a poor condition, I pray the same prayer, *Thy will be done*; so nothing comes amiss to me, because I labour to submit my will in all things to the will of God. If then we could imitate this man in all conditions, to endeavour to bring our wills in obedience and subjection to the will of God, we should then be good practitioners in this excellent art of Contentment.

Sect. 3.

Containing a sixth motive to Contentment.

THe ſixth Conſideration (to mention no more) ſhall be drawn from the good companions and aſſociats of this choice grace of contentment. *Diogenes*, when he was to let his houſe, urged this great argument, to get a good tenant, becauſe (ſaid he) my houſe hath good neighbours round about it. I am ſure amongſt many there are three ſpecial aſſociats and boſom companions of contentment, whoſe neighbourhood and acquaintance are much to be deſired and prized, and they are faith, patience and heavenly-mindedneſs. 6. *Conſid.* The companions and aſſociats of Contentment.

1. Faith is a companion of contentment. Faith and dependance on God is a ſpecial means to work the heart over to ſuch an excellent temper. For faith acting on the promiſes, with a ſtedfaſt recumbence on the Word of God, doth abundantly ſtay and quiet the hearts of Chriſtians, and ſupport and carry them with cheerfulneſs through the greateſt ſtorms of afflictions. A man faln into the water catcheth hold of any twig, any cord, or any hand to help him out: ſo though a Chriſtian be in a ſinking condition, yet if he can adhere to the divine promiſes, and act faith upon them, he will 1. Faith is a companion of contentment.

be held up above water. It is unbelief which cauſeth ſo many tumultuous and vexatious thoughts in our hearts. Could we beleeve God, and truſt in him on his word, that he is faithful in all his promiſes, all-ſufficient, omnipotent, willing and able to relieve and help us, and that he is of tender bowels, full of compaſſion, a Father of mercies and a God of all conſolations; ſuch ſerious meditations as theſe would ſtifle all diſcontented thoughts in the conception, nip them in the bud, and cruſh them in their firſt motions. The more faith the more contentedneſs, and the more unbelief the more diſcontentedneſs. Faith acts upon a ground of experience, *Rom.* 8. 28. *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpoſe.* Faith keeps a beleever alive in dying times; it keeps the heart from fainting, *Pſal.* 27. 14. *Wait on the Lord: Be of good courage, and he ſhall ſtrengthen thine heart, wait I ſay on the Lord.* Whence ariſe diſcontented murmuring ſpeeches, but from unbelief? For unbelief is that root of bitterneſs which brings forth nothing, but gall and wormwood. When men are ſtraitned for outward things, they are exceedingly perplexed and troubled in their ſpirits; but when faith interpoſeth, it affords meat, drink and clothes; for a beleever

beleever truſts God with all, and he accounts God his life and livelyhood, and all. How then doth a beleever live? the Prophet tells us, *Hab.* 2. 4. *The juſt ſhall live by his faith.* For the excellency and uſefulneſs of this ſentence is ſo evident, as that it is quoted in ſeveral places of Scripture, and preſs'd home unto point of practice. When troubles and vexations ariſe from thwarting paſſages of providence, faith ſteps in and returns away with Trophies of victory, 1 *Joh.* 5. 4. *This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.* When multitudes are perplexed and endangered, by reaſon of the methods, wiles and variety of Satans temptations, then faith is to be made uſe of as a ſtrong ſhield, to ward off the blows, 1 *Pet.* 5. 9. *Whom reſiſt, ſtedfaſt in the faith.* In one word let it be ſpoken, that in all troubles, diſaſters and ſufferings, faith quiets the mind. Faith is like that meal, which being caſt into the pot, the wild gourds did no harm, but notwithſtanding they were ſhred in the pot, yet as ſoon as the meal was put in, the pottage became wholeſom. Faith ſweetens the ſowreſt pills of afflictions, and becalms the ſpirit amidſt the ſharpeſt ſufferings. Yet we muſt with caution expreſs our ſelves. Faith that is genuine and of the right ſtamp, muſt be a purifying faith, and a working

Rom. 1. 17. Gal. 2. 20. & 3. 11. Hebr. 10. 38.

2 Kings 4. 42.

Acts 15. 9. Gal. 5. 6.

faith: and however *Luther* be misunderstood, when he saith, *Cavete à bonis operibus*; he means that we must beware of trusting in good works, so as to plead merit, and to expect salvation by them, he elsewhere gives this character of faith, *Fides maxima & heroica operatur.* Faith then is not to be understood as an instrument in working or meriting, but as an instrument in receiving and applying of grace and mercy through Christ. Faith is our act, and it is our duty to beleeve; but it is Gods gift; we of our selves are no more able to beleeve, then to perform the Commandments. The self-same power that raised up Christ from the dead, can onely raise us up to beleeve, *Col.* 2. 12. *Buried with him in baptisme, wherein you are also risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.* That we may not rest as Papists do, *opere operato*, the Apostle mentions the Authour and Giver of faith. And so likewise the Apostle tells us, *Eph.* 2. 8. *For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of your selves, it is the gift of God.* Faith is a necessary companion of contentment, they both come from God, and where they are, they do (as the expression is) *mutuas locare operas*, they joyn in

Cùm Baptismi efficacia salutaris à fide pendeat, aequum est ut ipsa fides à solo Deo expetatur, ne nobis in nobis detur aliqua ansa gloriandi. Dav. in Col. 2. 12.

in a mutual ſerviceableneſs one to another, and as the proverb is, *Vara vibiam ſequitur*; ſo faith and contentment joyn together in a mutual aſſiſtance, and furtherance of each other. Thus faith is one companion of contentment.

2. A ſecond companion of contentment is patience; the ready way to learn contentment, is to prepoſſeſs our ſelves with patience. Who are the diſcontented perſons, but ſuch as are impatient, fretting and diſquieting themſelves under their burdens? But ſuch as are patient, ſubmiſſive ſpirited perſons, have attained unto a good proficiency in this choice art of contentedneſs. This grace of patience is of ſingular uſe, for thereby we poſſeſs our ſelves, and enjoy all that we have quietly and contentedly. It is our Saviours command, *Luke* 21. 19. *In your patience poſſeſs ye your ſouls.* And there is an abſolute neceſſity of exerciſing this grace of patience, *Hebr.* 10. 36. *For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promiſe.* As a ſouldiers courage is known in a day of battel; ſo is a Chriſtians patience tried in time of affliction. *Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope.* Wherefore *Cyprian* that eminent Martyr, in that excellent book of

2. Patience is a companion of contentment.

patience gives this counſel, *In thy grief bear, and in thy humility have patience, becauſe gold and ſilver is tried in the fire, as* Job *was tried and approved, and by the vertue of patience, promoted to the higheſt top of praiſe.* Wherefore then, the right remedy is, when afflictions many and great are incumbent on us, to baniſh all diſcontents and murmurings, and quietly and patiently to ſubmit to the correcting hand of God. Thus patience is another companion of contentment.

In dolore ſuſtine, & in humilitate tua patientiam habe, quoniam in igne probatur aurum & argentum; ſic Job examinatus eſt & probatus, & ad ſummum faſtigium laudis patientiæ virtute provectus. Cypr. lib. de patientia.

3. Heavenly mindedneſs is a companion of contentedneſs.

3. A third companion of contentedneſs is heavenly mindedneſs. A godly mans converſation or citizenſhip (for ſo the word imports) is in heaven. His negotiations and merchandizings, even all the trade which he drives is for heaven: heaven is his countrey, that is his Fathers houſe. When *Anaxagoras* was asked, *Haſt thou any regard of thy countrey? Yes* (ſaith he) *and pointed his hand up towards heaven.* He that accounts heaven his throne and inheritance, will look upon earth no better then his footſtool. He lives above earth, whoſe heart is in heaven. Whence then proceeds ſo many murmuring and querulous ſpeeches? How comes it to paſs, that upon

Ἡμῶν δὲ τὸ πολίτευμα &c. *Nos autem ut cœlorum cives nos gerimus.* Beza.

on any croſs thwarting providence, we fret and repine, and are ſo exceedingly perplexed with melancholy and diſcontent? The reaſon is, becauſe we ſet our hearts too much upon the world, and mind earthly things. *If ſin ſat heavy* (as Reverend Mr *Dod* uſed to ſay) *then the world would ſit light, but becauſe the world ſits heavy, ſin ſits light.* If our converſation was in heaven, and we took a proſpect of it in ſerious contemplations; and if we aſcended up into the mount with *Moſes*, and retired our ſelves into the fields with *Iſaac*, to have more freedom for meditation; and did we with *Enoch* walk with God, and with *David*'s bleſſed man meditate in the Law of God, day and night, if this was our condition, we ſhould take ſo much delight and ſatisfaction in heavenly things, as we ſhould not vex and torment our ſelves for the want of worldly things. Wherefore then let us with all holy greedineſs labour after heavenly mindedneſs, and this is an excellent means to learn the leſſon of divine Contentment. If we account heaven our treaſure, joy and hope, our hearts will be fixed thereon, our tongues will be ſpeaking thereof; even our whole joy, deſires and delights will be taken up, and employed about the ſerious thoughts of heavenly things. Wherefore though in this preſent world (as it is the lot

lot of travellers in their Inn) we may meet with many diſappointments and diſſatisfactions; yet the ſerious meditations of heaven (which is our home) will abundantly make amends for all. If we ſhould fancy a perpetuity in an Inn, and dream of an abiding happineſs there, we ſhould exceedingly forget our ſelves. We may apply *Pſal.* 49. 11, 12. *Their inward thought is, that their houſes ſhall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names. Nevertheleſs man being in honour abideth not; he is like the beaſts that periſh.* We ſhould not look upon our ſelves as perpetual proprietours and poſſeſſours of a fee-ſimple without any alteration; but we ſhould look upon our ſelves as ſtrangers and pilgrims (as the Apoſtle writes) 1 *Pet.* 2. 11. *Dearly beloved, I beſeech you, as ſtrangers and pilgrims abſtain from fleſhly luſts, which war againſt the ſoul.* Whoever then is willing to learn this grand leſſon of Contentment, let him make choice of thoſe three choice companions, viz. *faith, patience and heavenly mindedneſs*, and queſtionleſs, through the aſſiſting grace of God, he ſhall arrive unto an high attainment and perfection, in this ſo much to be deſired art of divine Contentment.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Chap. 7. Containing an use for direction.

Containing a fourth Use, which is for direction, wherein five Impediments are to be removed, and ten Duties are to be put in practice.

SECT. I.

Removing five grand Impediments of Contentment.

Use 4. For direction.

I Proceed to a fourth Use, which is for direction, and for the more profitable handling of this Use, I shall discover five grand Impediments, which as so many stumbling blocks are to be removed out of the way, and then I shall prescribe ten choice duties, which are to be reduced unto point of practice.

1. For the impediments which obstruct and set a bar against contentment, I shall amongst a multitude that might be named, confine my self unto five onely, *viz.* Unbelief, Unthankfulness, Immoderate cares of the world, Instability of spirit and Voluptuousness. These five are as so many remora's and obstacles in the way to hinder and stop contentment.

The

1. Impediment of contentment is unbelief.

The first Impediment of contentment is unbelief: for it is the mother of discontent, that cursed root, whereon grows those cursed fruits of impatience, murmurings and repinings, and such like, which are far more bitter then gall and wormwood. If we could trust God and beleeve him to be All-sufficient and Omnipotent, and therefore able to help us, and could we beleeve God to be a God of truth, and therefore as good as his word, and could we beleeve him to be a God of wisdom, knowing how to contrive and order all things for our good, then we should soon banish out of our hearts all discontented and repining thoughts: but such is the great mischief of unbelief, that it foments and cherisheth all vexatious perplexing thoughts. Hence it cometh to pass, that an unbeleever discovers his discontent in respect of two objects, viz. *The Word of God, and works of God.* As to both unbelief discovers it self.

1. An unbeleever distrusts the Word of God.

1. An unbeleever questions and distrusts the truth of the Word of God: for so God complains, *Psal.* 106. 24, 25. *Yea, they despised the pleasant land, they beleeved not his word; But murmured in their tents, and hearkned not unto the voice of the Lord.* God promised them a land flowing with milk and honey, and they sent searchers to view the land. They brought goodly fruit,

fruit, even a cluſter of grapes ſo great, as it was carried between two: yet notwithſtanding all Gods promiſes, and their own viſible experiences, they beleeved not his word. Many gracious promiſes God makes, and he is faithful in his promiſes: He glorieth that he is a God keeping covenant; (for his covenant is a covenant of ſalt, not capable of the leaſt putrefaction; yet) unbeleevers call all Gods promiſes into queſtion: ſuch were foretold of, 2 *Pet.* 3. 4. whom the Apoſtle brands for *ſcoffers, walking after their own luſts, and ſaying, Where is the promiſe of his coming?* The unbeleeving Prince mentioned, 2 *Kings* 7. 19, 20. is a ſtanding monument and warning-piece, who when the Lord promiſed plenty in *Samaria*, he diſtruſted Gods promiſe, and he was made a dreadful ſpectacle of unbelief; for *the people trod him in the crowd* to death. Let us forbear diſputings, reaſonings, expoſtulatings with God, and beleeve God upon his word; ſo did *David*, a pattern for our imitation, *Pſal.* 56. 3, 4. *What time I am afraid, I will truſt in thee: In God I will praiſe his word: In God I have put my truſt, I will not fear what fleſh can do unto me.* Numb. 13. 23.

2. An unbeleever queſtions and diſtruſts the works of God. Notwithſtanding variety of protections, proviſions, ſecurity and comfort, and other experiences of the works of 2. An unbeleever queſtions & diſtruſts the works of God.

of divine providence, an unbeleever ſtill diſtruſts God, and will not beleeve. O what wonderful works did God for the children of Iſrael, in delivering them from *Egyptian* bondage, and in making the ſea dry land for them to paſs over, and when they were ſafely paſſed over, God cauſed the ſea to return to its ſtrength, and in it *Pharaoh* and all his hoſt were drowned: and after this great deliverance of the children of Iſrael from the Red ſea, God opened his ſtore-houſes to make proviſion for them: Manna and Quails were rained down to feed them; and to quench their thirſt the flinty rock became a ſpringing well, yet notwithſtanding all theſe viſible providences, they beleeved not the works of God, *Pſal.* 78. 32. *For all this they ſinned ſtill, and beleeved not for his wondrous works.* Theſe were unbeleevers of the firſt magnitude, who neither beleeved the Word of God, nor the works of God, and therefore they muſt needs be their own enemies to all manner of contentment; for there can be no ſolid ground of contentment but in God, and from his gift. If then we diſtruſt him, and will neither beleeve his word, nor his works, there can be no poſſibility of contentment.

1. Impediment of Contentment is unthankfulneſs.

2. A ſecond Impediment of Contentment is unthankfulneſs. None are ſo diſcontented,

ed, none ſuch murmurers, as unthankful perſons; ſuch as are not ſenſible of thoſe great mercies which they already enjoy, but are ſtill a whining and murmuring for what they have not, theſe in a high manner bewray their unthankfulneſs. Have not many of us more then Chriſt had when he was upon earth? He who was Owner and Commander of the whole world, was contented to be a ſervant, and live in a poor mean condition, 2 *Cor.* 8. 9. *For ye know the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that though he was rich, yet for your ſakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.* And when a man came to Chriſt, and profeſſed his readineſs to follow Chriſt whitherſoever he went, Chriſt who knew his heart gave a ſuitable anſwer; and Jeſus ſaith unto him, *The foxes have holes, and* Matt. 8. 20. *the birds of the air have neſts, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.* The man had a houſe in his deſigne and expectation, but he was diſappointed of his expectations. When in our ſerious thoughts we conſider what Chriſt wanted as to earthly things, and what we have, this conſideration may excite us to thankfulneſs. But it is commonly obſerved, that ſuch as are unthankful for, and unſenſible of the preſent mercies which they enjoy, of all others they are ſtill murmuring and

and complaining becauſe they have no more. Wherefore to learn this leſſon of contentment, we muſt unlearn the leſſon of ingratitude. Amongſt Heathens as well as Chriſtians, the ſin of ingratitude is marked with a brand of infamy: *Si ingratum dixeris, omnia dixeris*, is a ſaying no more common then true, implying that a man that hath ſaid that which ſavours of ingratitude, hath ſaid all the worſt that he can. A learned Oratour takes notice, *That it is the conſent of all nations, that the earth brings forth nothing worſe then an ungrateful man.*

Omnes conſentiunt gentes terram creare nihil pejus homine ingrato. Baudii Orat. p. 114.

Seneca reckons ingratitude amongſt the greateſt vices; and *Xenophon* obſerves, that *impudence follows ingratitude.* It is left upon record as a badge of infamy upon the chief butler, *Gen.* 40. 23. *Yet did not the chief butler remember Joſeph, but forgat him.* Unthankful men are mentioned in the ſame catalogue with thoſe abominable ſinners, which ſhall come in the laſt and perilous times, 2 *Tim.* 3. 2. *&c. For men ſhall be lovers of their own ſelves, covetous, boaſters, proud, blaſphemous, diſobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, &c.* Wherefore we muſt utterly deteſt and abhor this abominable

Inter plurima maximáque vitia nullum eſt frequentius quàm ingrati animi. Sen.

Ἔπεσθαι γὰρ δοκεῖ τῇ ἀχαριστίᾳ ἡ ἀναιδεύντια. Xenoph. Cyropæd. l. 1.

minable ſin of ingratitude; not onely in reſpect of others (becauſe it is a ſordid and ignominious ſin) but alſo in reſpect of our ſelves, becauſe it diſquieteth and vexeth the ſpirit, inſomuch as we enjoy nothing contentedly, that we poſſeſs.

A third Impediment of Contentedneſs is an immoderate care of the world: when the heart is encumbred and intangled with variety of perplexing and carking cares, there can be no contentment of mind: for as immoderate love of the world comes in at one door, contentment of mind runs out at the other door: we muſt then diſtinguiſh between a moderate and immoderate care, between a provident frugal care, and a carking vexatious care. A moderate and provident care is lawful and neceſſary: none ought to eat the bread of idleneſs. And *he that provides not for his family is worſe then an infidel, and hath denied the faith.* But the queſtion will be ask'd, How can a man be ſaid to deny the faith? I will give an anſwer from *Calvin* on the place, *There can be no piety towards God, where any can ſo put off all ſenſe of humanity.* But the care forbidden is, that onely which is immoderate carking and tormenting; this Chriſt in one Chapter three times forbids, *Matth.* 6.25, 31, 34. *Take no thought:* The

3 Impediment of contentment, immoderate care of the world.

1 Tim. 5. 8.

Nulla enim in Deum eſt pietas ubi quis ità humanitatis ſenſum exuit poteſt. Calv. in loc.

word is μεριμνήσητε. The etymology is παρὰ τὸ μερίζειν τὸν νοῦν, it is a dividing, distracting, rending and torturing the mind: μεριμνὰ is *solicitudo diffidentiæ*, a distrustful solicitude accompanied with a vexatious carking care. The charge of the Apostle is, *Phil.* 4. 6. *Be careful for nothing*: We are then to distinguish between a primary and secondary care: primarily our care must be to glorifie God, and save our souls. Secondarily, we must take care after worldly things: but in religion that figure called ὕστερον πρότερον must be carefully avoided: for many make that their first care, which should be their last. The order which Christ prescribes ought to be the certain and infallible rule, *But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you*: but how many are there who intangle and inveigle themselves with multiplicity of worldly incumbrances, like a mill-horse, always walking if not running the round, and hurrying themselves about with multitude of anxious and vexatious cares. And what get they by their anxious solicitous cares, but a farther addition of care and dissatisfaction: for the more they thus turmoil and disturb their spirits, the more discontented and unsatisfied they are. Hence it comes to pass, that they can neither eat nor

Solicitudo est ægritudo cum cogitatione. Cic. Tusc. 4.

Μηδὲν μεριμνᾶτε, *Anxiè & cum summa animi solicitudine atque ærumnâ cogitare.* Zanch.

Matth. 6. 33.

nor drink, nor ſleep quietly, becauſe they tire and wear out themſelves with multitudes of melancholical diſquieting thoughts. Hereupon they make aſſays and trials of many ways, and undertake variety of projects to advance their eſtate in the world, and it proves with them like thoſe ſmiths, who have too many irons in the fire, and ſo neglect ſome of them. It is frequently obſerved, that all thoſe who intermeddle in too many ways, miſcarry frequently in the managing of them, and after miſcarriages and diſappointments, O! how is a covetous mammoniſt perplexed and diſcontented: the love of the world hath ſwallowed up his affections, and therefore he accounts the wedge of gold his confidence. *Micha*, when the children of *Dan* robbed him, purſues them, and cries out in the bitterneſs of his ſpirit, *Ye have taken away my gods, and the Prieſt, and ye are gone away, and what have I more?* So covetous worldlings cry out with ſo much bitterneſs, when any worldly loſſes befall them, as if God and heaven were to be undervalued in compariſon of them: wherefore it is a ſpecial duty incumbent on us, to baniſh away from us the immoderate love of the world; For *the friendſhip of the world is enmity againſt God*, and it is our enemy likewiſe; for we can never enjoy any thing to our

Judg. 18. and 24.

John 4. 4.

content and satisfaction, if our hearts with too much eagerness hanker after the world.

4. Impediment, instability of spirit.

A fourth Impediment is instability of spirit. An inconstant fluctuating mind, unsettled and tost up and down, can never enjoy any real and solid contentment; for it is a composed stable spirit which is Gods gift, which makes a Christian contented with that present portion, and causeth him to rest quietly in that present station and condition, wherein God hath set him: When as on the contrary, an unstable spirit, a wandring fickle head will not let a man be quiet in any place and condition. *Solomon* tells us, *Prov.* 27. 8. *As a bird that wandreth from her nest, so is a man that wandreth from his place.* *Grotius* gives (as I conceive) an apposite exposition on the place, *A bird*, saith he, *flying from her nest is easily taken; so is he that journeyeth a long way from his house, exposed to many dangers.* So when men relinquish their calling, and ramble abroad, leaving their families to sink, or swim, taking no care of them, they bring swift destruction on themselves and their posterity. It is a common saying, that a *tumbling stone never gathers moss:* no more do unsettled fickle persons thrive whithersoever they go, and such are they, who are so deeply overcome with melancholy, as that

Facilè capitur avis à nido avolans; sic & qui domo relictâ, longè peregrinatur multis se objicit periculis. Grot. in Prov. 27. 8.

that they neither enjoy themſelves comfortably at home, nor abroad: for when they are at home, their hearts are abroad, and when they are abroad their hearts are at home. They fix no where; for by being every where in their wandring and extravagant thoughts, they are fixed no where to any good purpoſe. Theſe unſtable and fickle-headed perſons are full of diſcontents, and not more diſcontented with troubles from abroad, then from thoſe emergences which fall out at home: they are not more vexed at others, then they are at themſelves. A man of an inconſtant ſpirit is like a wave of the ſea, toſt up and down, or like a weather-cock that turns with every wind; he is ſo inconſtant, that he knows not his own mind, he knows not what he would have, he is not his own man; but he is inconſtant and unfaithful to himſelf. St *James* gives a character of ſuch a man, *A double-minded man is unſtable in all his ways.* Now to find out *a double and unſtable man,* where to have him no man knows. You may hear him murmuring, whining and grumbling, but you cannot truſt nor beleeve him on his word. Many heathens were renowned for their conſtancy and ſettled reſolution. It was ſaid of *Fabricius*, that one might ſooner turn the Sun out of the firmament, then turn him

James 1. 8. Ἀνὴρ δίψυχος ἀκατάστατος.

from the course of Justice. *Regulus* was a man constant to his engagement, though he foresaw the ensuing danger which did befall him. And *Aristides* could not be seduced from the course of Justice. *Cicero* against *Catiline* professeth himself to be one and the same man, in his elder and younger years (that is,) a true friend to the Commonwealth. *Cassinus* hath an high passage setting forth the constancy of his resolution, which amounts to this sense, Come what will come, even the worst that can be imagined, yet he will not alter his mind. This constancy and resolvedness of mind is a ready way to procure contentment; but by way of caution, we must always suppose, that constancy and settledness must be fixed upon right grounds and principles; let us be certain, that the principles are right, and then let us resolvedly put them into practice. *It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing:* so for constancy and resolution, we must exercise them in good things. And courage and constancy well placed are of singular benefit and furtherance to contentment: whereas levity, fickleness and inconstancy of spirit, raiseth mutinies, tumults,

Defendi Rempublicam adolescens, non deseram senex. Contempsi Catalinæ gladios, non pertimescebam tuos. Cic. Orat. 2. Philipp.

Non si fractus in me ruat mundus pavens, non si cavernis vanarus metet fremens, non, si caterva pestium obsideat latus, mutabo mentem quam mihi Christus dedit. Cass. Sol. p. 232.

mults, and variety of perturbations in our thoughts: wherefore to be well skill'd in this art of Contentment, we must abandon an unstable and inconstant spirit.

5. Impediment of contentment is Voluptuousness.

5. A fifth Impediment of Contentedness is Voluptuousness. Voluptuousness is a grand remora and obstacle to all manner of contentedness; for voluptuous men are still a plotting, projecting and contriving to add more fuel to the fire of their unsatiable appetite; therefore they leave no stone unmoved, nor no device unattempted for the satisfaction of their lusts. Hence it comes to pass, that many persons of great estates care not how much they spend in gaming and drinking, *&c.* and to supply their exorbitances, they oppress and grind the poor, rack their tenants, and project and devise irregular ways for the satisfaction of their lusts. Hence it comes to pass, that a prodigal man drowned in his voluptuous courses, and intoxicated with vain carnal delights, cares not what he is at, and what moneys he spends upon a lust, and he frets and torments himself, if his mind be not satisfied. But *Solomon* gives all voluptuous persons their doom, *Prov.* 21. 17. *He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man. He that loveth wine and oyl shall not be rich.* And the same wise man ironically begins, but concludes with a dreadful judgement, *Eccles.*

cleſ. 11. 9. *Rejoyce O young man in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the ſight of thine eyes, but know thou, that for all theſe things, God will bring thee into judgement.* Who could ever tell of any perſon, who waſted his time, ſtrength and eſtate in ſinful luſts and pleaſures, that found any real, ſolid and laſting contentment, when they looked back upon thoſe days and companions, with whom they lived rioutouſly? Can they take any ſatisfaction in
2 Sam. 13. 15. the remembrance of them? *Amnon* committed an abominable ſin of inceſt with *Tamar*, yet afterward, the hatred wherewith he hated her, was greater then the love wherewith he loved her. And all the Jovial, mad carowſings of drunkards commonly terminate in diſcontent and contention: ſo ſaith *Solomon*, *Who hath wo? Who hath ſorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath bablings? Who hath wounds without cauſe? Who hath redneſs of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine, they that go to ſeek mix'd wine.* *Belſhazzar* in the midſt of his jollity, was ſurpriſed with a terrible hand-writing, which wrote down his ſwift deſtruction; as we read, *Dan.* 5. 5. *In the ſame hour* (*i. e.* when they were drinking and praiſing the gods of gold and ſilver) *came forth fingers of a mans hand, and wrote over*

Prov. 23. 29, 30.

Cui accidunt multa incommoda corporis & animi, & fortunarum, Merc.

over against the candlestick, upon the plaister of the wall of the Kings palace, and the King saw the part of the hand that wrote; then the Kings countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joynts of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another. There is a laughter called *Risus Sardonius*, which ends always in great sorrow: the Poet alludes to it. And what else is the laughter and mad merriment of all ungodly men, but that which terminates in sorrow and mourning? For saith *Solomon*, *Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heavinesse.* And *Solomon* gives his experimental verdict against laughter. *I have said of laughter it is madnesse, and of mirth what doth it?* It is known by experience, that a man who hath misspent a whole day in jovial company and mad merriment, can take no rest, nor quietly enjoy himself at night. However at present, some please themselves with the society of ungodly men, yet, when they come to themselves, and are composed and deliberate in their thoughts, then it is the grief and vexation of their hearts, that ever they cast in their lot amongst such vile wretches: wherefore we may upon sure grounds conclude that voluptuousnesse is a grand impediment of Contentednesse.

Immo ego Sardois videar tibi amarior herbis. Virg.

Prov. 14. 13.

Eccles. 2. 2.

SECT.

Sect. 2.

Containing five Duties to be practised in order to Contentment.

HAving removed these five Impediments mentioned in the former Section, I shall prescribe ten Duties (whereof five shall be handled in this Section, and five in the Section following after) which if they be reduced into point of practice (through the grace of God) they will be special helps and furtherers to the getting and keeping of this excellent grace of contentment.

1. Duty is self-reflection.

The first Duty is to reflect upon our selves, and get a more familiar and intimate acquaintance at home: for it much conduceth to our advantage to be better known to our selves. Amongst many choice sentences of that eminently pious Father St *Bernard*, two I shall apply to my purpose: one is this, *There are many knowledges of men, but none is better then that whereby a man knoweth himself.* Another is, *He is a blessed man who can know himself, allow and disallow; for he that displeaseth himself, pleaseth God; and he that is vile in his own eyes, is dear in the eyes of God.*

Multæ sunt scientiæ hominum, sed nulla melior est illâ, quâ cognoscit homo seipsum. Bern. de interiori domo, p. 1073.

Beatus homo qui se potest cognoscere, probare & improbare. Nam qui sibi displicet, Deo placet; & qui sibi vilis est, Deo charus est. Bern. de interiori domo, p. 1072.

God. If then we would learn the divine art of Contentment, we muſt ſtudy our own hearts, how filthy they are, and how vile and abominable we are by reaſon of the pollution of ſin; when we our ſelves are throughly known unto our ſelves, we ſhall be better contented with our preſent condition, and then we ſhall attain unto a good degree of this knowledge of our ſelves, when in the ſimplicity and ſingleneſs of our hearts, we can make ſuch a confeſſion as *Jacob* did, *Gen.* 32. 10. *I am not worthy of the leaſt of all the mercies, and of all the truth which thou haſt ſhewed unto thy ſervant.* It is our great buſineſs and worth our beſt pains, to take a frequent ſurvey of our hearts and lives, to walk in the cloyſter of a mans own heart (as St *Bernard* expreſſeth it) and to ſearch into every angle and winding, is time well ſpent. Upon a ſerious review, we ſhall find many miſcarriages, and acknowledge that we have trod many ſteps awry, and are guilty of many deviations and tranſgreſſions from the rule of the word. Notwithſtanding variety of mercies heaped upon us, we have with *Jeſhurun waxed fat and kicked.* God hath given us all things richly to enjoy, we are maintained by Gods liberality, but we abuſe ſo great bounty: our clothes which are given for a covering, we abuſe to pride and vanity, the meat and drink

Ampulavi in clauſtro cordis mei. Bern.

Deut. 32. 15.

drink which are given for our nutrishment, we abuse to luxury and intemperance: the riches of the world which God hath given us for our comfortable subsistence, and for the supply of such as are in distress, we have abused to superfluity and prodigality; or else we have fixed our hearts so stedfastly upon the pelf and trash of the world, as if we acknowledged no other God but Mammon. Now then when in deliberate and serious meditations, we consider the wonderful bounty and patience of God so freely extended unto us, we shall with all thankfulness acknowledge the mercies of God in leaving to us any thing of this world to enjoy; for by reason of our great unthankfulness, and misimprovement of our talents, and abuse of mercies vouchsafed to us, we have made a forfeiture of all that we enjoy, and it is a miracle of mercy that God takes not the forfeiture, and strips and degrades us of all, and casts us down into the nethermost hell. Wherefore upon a serious consideration of our manifold provocations and rebellions against God, notwithstanding the patience, forbearings and long-sufferings of God exercised towards us, we have strong obligations to contentment. The mercies continued to us, are and ought to be esteemed of by us, as so many cords of love to draw us to this necessary duty of Contentment.

ment. Let us therefore every one reſolve with himſelf, *Mecum habitabo, I will dwell with my ſelf.* (*i. e.*) let us be more at home, and ſtudy our hearts more, and then we ſhall learn to be content.

A ſecond Duty is to compare our ſelves with others, and that with ſuch, who are above us in greatneſs, wealth, honours and promotions of the world. Notwithſtanding their grandeur and riches, conſidering their vexations, diſcontents and troubles, we have no cauſe to envy them; for though many men have great poſſeſſions, yet they can take no content in them, nor enjoy them with any delight and comfort. Great perſons are greater and larger marks oftentimes for their enemies to ſhoot againſt them. *Stobæus* relates a ſtory of *Policrates*, who gave to *Anacreon* five talents, but he was ſo perplexed and diſquieted with the thoughts of that money, that he could not ſleep, nor any other way comfortably enjoy himſelf: wherefore *Anacreon* reſtores the moneys to *Policrates*, ſaying, that *they were not ſo much worth, as to recompenſe thoſe diſtracting cares which he took for them.* When we take ſtrict notice how many there are, who compaſs'd vaſt eſtates by oppreſſion and extortion, by defrauding and circumventing others, making their ways by force

2. Duty, to compare our ſelves with others.

1. With our ſuperiours.

Ferunt ſummos ſydera montes.

Non tanti eſſe quanti ipſorum nomine curâ laborâret. Stob. cap. 39.

force and falshood, might and policies prevailing above right and honesty, we shall find no cause of discontent, or envy, because we are not in their condition: when we likewise consider the turmoils, vexations and troubles which many undergo, to keep that they have got already; we ought so far to abandon discontent and envy, as to abound in thanksgiving to God, through whose mercy we enjoy what we have in tranquillity and peace.

2. Let us compare our selves with inferiours.

2. If we compare our selves with inferiours, such as are to estate and degree far below us in the world, we have great cause to be content. How many mechanicks are there, who have not moneys to provide one day before another, & have not a bit of bread before they have wrought for it; yet they eat and drink, and sleep more cheerfully then those great Persons, who are possessed of Lordships and Mannours, and thousands of gold and silver. If we would be better proficients in this art of contentment, we should not disdain to go to poor mens houses, and take notice of their manner of living, and after what way they maintain their families. If we enter into conference with some of the poorer sort of people, we shall be informed of remarkable passages of Gods good hand and providence for them

and

and their children in times of famine and great ſcarcity. It is frequently obſerved, that many poor mens children, who fare hardly, look more fat and well-liking then ſome who have great revenues. Let us therefore compare our ſelves with poor and inferiour perſons, and ſee how contentedly they live with a little, and are thankful for far leſs then we are preſent poſſeſſours of. Such a weighty conſideration as this ſet home upon our hearts may effectually (through the grace of God) baniſh from us all murmuring and whining language, and enlarge both our hearts and mouths to be thankful for the mercies which we enjoy, and move our hearts to open our bowels of compaſſion towards all ſuch as are in poverty and neceſſitous conditions.

A third duty is to labour for that excellent grace of ſelf-denial. Contentment and ſelf-denial are ſo near and dear to each other, that they live and die together; inſomuch as theſe are convertible propoſitions, *A ſelf-denying perſon is a contented perſon, and a contented perſon is a ſelf-denying perſon.* Self-denial and taking up the croſs are mentioned together, as if there were ſome connexion between. It frequently ſo falls out, that ſelf-denial and bearing Chriſts croſs meet in one and the ſelf-ſame perſon. Both theſe

3. Duty to labour for ſelf-denial.

these duties of self-denial and bearing of the cross are mentioned in three Evangelists, *viz. Matth.* 16. 24. *Mark* 8. 34. *Luke* 19. 23. whatever savours of self must be denied and altogether abandoned so far forth, as it stands in competition with, or opposition to Jesus Christ. A great scholar must deny his learning: a man of wisdom must deny his learning, and a strong man must deny his strength; a rich man must deny his riches, and a Noble-man must deny honours. All that is self must be denied, as self-opinions, self-reasonings and self-interests; even all must be denied for Christ. And when a man amidst the affluence of worldly things can deny himself, it is an evident demonstration that he is a man of a contented spirit; for contentment and self-denial do keep a sweet and amicable correspondence with each other. Self-denial exciteth and encourageth us to contentment, and contentment prevails with us to be willing to deny our selves. This self-denial is of such great use and necessity, as *Salvian* saith, *Abdicare à teipso, nè abdiceris à Christo; repudia te, ut recipiaris à Christo.* That excellent Martyr Mr *Bradford* used to say, *whosoever hath not learned the lesson of the Cross, hath not learned his A, B, C. in the school of Christ.* This lesson of self-denial

Salv. lib. 5. *p.* 167.

if

if it be learn'd well, it will teach us to bear our daily croſs, both with patience and cheerfulneſs. Self-denial helps very much to humble a proud heart, and to mollifie a hard heart. When one ſtrikes with an hammer upon an anvile it makes a great noiſe, becauſe hard and hard meeting together makes oppoſition: and in building, unleſs there be cement and ſoder, there can be no wall reared up: but if one ſtrikes a hammer upon a pillow, it makes no noiſe, becauſe the pillow is ſoft and yeelds to the blow. Let God ſtrike what ſtroke he pleaſeth, a ſelf-denying ſpirit yeelds ſubmiſſively and patiently to the blow. And of this root of ſelf-denial, there grows the ſpirit of Contentment.

Durum ſuper durum non vult condere murum.

A fourth Duty is to ſtudy the vanity of the creature. All things under the Sun are vanity and emptineſs, and fading and periſhing things; both deficient and inſufficient, and altogether unable to afford any real contentment and ſatisfaction to an immortal and heavenly-born-being ſoul. Why then ſhould we ſet our hearts upon worldly things? When we graſp them moſt greedily, we graſp nothing but ſmoke, or make an attempt to hold the wind in our fiſts. Hiſtorians write, that the apples of *Sodom* are of ſuch a beautiful aſpect, as

Duty 4. Study the vanity of the creatures.

to invite the beholders to take them, but as soon as ever they touch them, they fall into cinders and ashes. *Tertullian* gives his verdict of earthly things, saying, that *they are imaginary in the world, and contain no solidity in them.* *Solomon* had greater experience of earthly things then many thousands have had, yet in that rare Book (which may be called his Retractations) he gives this censure, *Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities, all is vanity.* Considering therefore the emptiness and dissatisfaction, the vanity and deficiency of all created things, why should we then so much perplex and torture our selves for the want of them; but rather labour to be contented with what we have, then overtire and waste our spirits with immoderate grief and vexation, for what we want and would have; which if we had, notwithstanding we should remain discontented. *Cyprian* hath a remarkable saying to this purpose, *That whatsoever is born in this old age of the world degenerates, so that no man needs wonder, that particular things in the world have begun to fail, seeing that the world is now in defection.* Wherefore upon a serious consideration,

Omnia imaginaria in seculo, & nihil veri. Tertull. de corona militis, cap. 13.

Eccles. 1, 2.

Quodcunque nunc nascitur mundi ipsum senectute degenerat, ut nemo miretur singula in mundo cæpisse deficere, cum totus ipse jam mundus in defectione sit. Cypr. contra Demetr.

ration, that the creature is ſubject to vanity, and cauſeth much vexation of ſpirit, and is altogether unable to ſatisfie an immortal ſoul; and ſeeing that we experiment a great deal of treachery and deceitfulneſs in creatures, we ſhould hence raiſe ground of contentment in thoſe things, which we enjoy at preſent, fearing that we may meet with fruſtrations and diſappointments in our expectations after greater matters. The things in this world are uſually compared to bubbles, vapours, flowers, dreams, *&c.* and till we can lay any faſt hold on thoſe things, we cannot fix upon earthly vanities. A muſhrom is ſuddenly gone. *Jonah*'s gourd in one night ſprang up and withered. As ſoon as *Jonah* was glad of the ſhade of the gourd, God prepared a worm to ſmite it. There are inward worms, as the terrours of afflicted conſciences, and outward worms of croſſes and loſſes, which may ſoon daſh all our comforts, and ſpoil all our mirth. The horrours of a tormenting and galling conſcience, the loſs of a dear and near relation, deprivation of an eſtate by fire, robbery, *&c.* may ſoon embitter our remaining enjoyments. If then we make reckoning of any certain fruition of any thing under the Sun, we are utterly miſ-

taken, and account that ſomething which is a meer vanity. We are ſoon at the bottom of all creatures, and we may quickly apprehend the utmoſt which they can afford, and upon an exact computation, we ſhall find them to be but meer cyphers and inſignificant things; ſo that if we ſtudy the vanity of all earthly things, we ſhall the ſooner learn this choice leſſon of Contentment.

Duty 5. Study the fulneſs that is in Jeſus Chriſt.

5. A fifth Duty is to ſtudy the fulneſs that is in Jeſus Chriſt: if we get the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, and underſtand that fulneſs that is in him, we ſhall ſet an higher price on Chriſt, and value the world at a leſſer rate; we ſhall account Chriſt our portion, and if we can make ſure our intereſt in him, we ſhall be well contented, though we enjoy the leſs of the world.

Col. 1. 19. The Apoſtle tells us, *For it pleaſed the Father, that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell.* We uſually diſtinguiſh, that there is *Plenitudo fontis, & plenitudo vaſis.* In Chriſt there is a fulneſs of a fountain; for *God*

Joh. 3. 34. *giveth not the Spirit by meaſure unto him.* Now this fulneſs in Chriſt is communicated unto his children, and they ſhall receive thereof according to their meaſure, as much as their veſſels can hold. Let us take ſpecial notice of *Joh.* 1. 16. *And of his*

his fulneſs have all we received, and grace for grace. *Beza* upon this Scripture quotes a learned Authour, and underſtands grace for grace, *Gratiam gratiâ cumulatam*, but upon after thoughts he determines according to the judgement of St *Auguſtine*, who ſaith, *Inſtead of the grace of the law which paſſeth away, we have received the grace of the Goſpel which abideth, and inſtead of ſhadows and repreſentations of the old Teſtament, grace and truth is revealed by Jeſus Chriſt.* Wherefore if we beleeve (as we ſhould) that there is a fulneſs in Jeſus Chriſt, why ſhould we vex and diſquiet our ſelves, becauſe we want the things of the world, which are vain, empty, and no ways able to ſatisfie an immortal ſoul? Chriſt enjoyed is infinitely to be preferred before all the world: for in him there is fulneſs of wiſdom to councel us, fulneſs of mercy to pardon us, fulneſs of righteouſneſs to juſtifie us, fulneſs of holineſs to ſanctifie us, and fulneſs of glory to make us happy to all eternity. If then in good earneſt we buſie our ſelves with the meditation of the fulneſs of Chriſt, we ſhall get our hearts alienated from things below, and fixed on things above. The apprehenſion of Chriſts fulneſs will quickly diſcover the vanity and emptineſs of all

creatures. If then a man enjoy very little of the world, and in the mean time enjoyeth a sacred acquaintance and communion with Jesus Christ, he hath abundantly enough, and therefore he is contented and satisfied, because he hath made God his portion, and accounts Christ his treasure, riches, even all in all; and such a person is a contented person.

Sect. 3.

Containing five more duties to be practised in order to contentment.

Duty 6. Study the divine promises.

The sixth Duty is to study the divine promises. There is enough in Gods promises to quiet and satisfie the soul of any man. The promises may be compared to those breasts of consolation mentioned, *Isai. 66. 11. That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations, that ye may milk out and be delighted with the abundance of her glory.* There is much nourishment to be got in the divine promises; and the promises may be compared to the wells of salvation, *Isai. 12. 3. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.* O what sweet refreshing promises are there to revive and comfort us in variety of conditions. The promises

promiſes afford a ſalve for every ſore, therefore if we would learn this grand leſſon of Contentment, let us be well acquainted with the divine promiſes. As for inſtance, if the want of earthly things ſtrike too cloſe upon us, and afflict our ſpirits, amongſt many promiſes, let us make particular application of thoſe three eſpecially; one is *Pſal.* 84. 11. *For the Lord is a ſun and ſhield, the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.* A ſecond promiſe is, *Matth.* 6. 33. *But ſeek ye firſt the kingdom of God, and his righteouſneſs, and all theſe things ſhall be added unto you.* A third promiſe is, *Rom.* 8. 32. *He that ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how ſhall he not with him freely give us all things?* Suppoſe farther, a man be afflicted with ſore and lingring diſeaſes, let him ſtudy the promiſes. Two I ſhall mention, one is, *Exod.* 15. 26. *I will put none of theſe diſeaſes upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians, for I am the Lord that healeth thee.* Another promiſe is, *Pſal.* 103. 3. *Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diſeaſes.* If a man be afraid of potent enemies, let him apply the promiſes. Amongſt many, I ſhall give one onely inſtance, which may ſerve

inſtead of many, and that is, *Iſai.* 41. 10, 11. *Fear thou not, for I am with thee, be not diſmayed, for I am thy God: I will ſtrengthen thee; yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteouſneſs: Behold, all they that were incenſed againſt thee ſhall be aſhamed and confounded, they ſhall be as nothing, and they that ſtrive with thee, ſhall periſh.* In a word, there is abundant matter of conſolation in the promiſes, to quiet and ſtay the heart of a Chriſtian in all ſorts of conditions, whether they concern this life, or that which is to come. For, ſaith the Apoſtle, *Godlineſs is profitable unto all things, having promiſe of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.* We muſt therefore be well ſtudied in the promiſes, and live upon them, and if we have ſo much wiſdom as to make a ſuitable and particular application of them, we ſhall extricate our ſelves (through the ſtrength of God) out of many emergent ſtreights and difficulties, and learn this neceſſary leſſon of contentment: for the more we know and beleeve the promiſes, and taſte ſweetneſs in them, the more contentment we ſhall have, and through the grace of God we ſhall baniſh murmuring and repining thoughts.

1 Tim. 4. 8.

A

A ſeventh Duty is to take a ſerious review, and make a diligent obſervation of divine providences. Gods providences evidently prove the truth of his promiſes, and if we (according to our duty) treaſure up our experiences concerning providences, how in variety of ſtraights and troubles, we have received ſupplies and ſuccours from heaven, and how God hath made proviſion for us, and kept us alive in times of dearth and ſcarcity; ſuch conſiderations ſet home upon our hearts will read us an uſeful lecture of Contentment, and help us to be good proficients in this kind of learning. Are our eyes in our heads? (as *Solomon* ſaith the wiſe mans are) Eccleſ. 2. 14. Do we take notice of providences as we ought to do? Then we ſhould obſerve how Gods providence doth extend it ſelf to all his creatures both ſmall as well as great; God takes care for vegetives: He clothes the graſs, and puts a greater glory upon one lily, then upon all *Solomons* royal Matt. 6. 28. eſtate. God takes care for bruits. God feeds the ravens: the lions ſeek their meat of God. Though lions be creatures of Luke 12. great ſtrength, and greedy after their prey, 24. Pſ. 147. 9. yet they receive their food through Gods Pſ. 104. 21. bountiful proviſion. Now ſeeing God takes ſo great care for bruitiſh creatures, it

Duty 7. Obſerve the divine providences.

it is evident, that he takes abundantly much more for mankind. God doth good for all; even the vileſt of men are protected, ſuſtained, provided for, and kept alive by Gods common providence: but as for ſuch as have intereſt in the covenant of grace, they enjoy the benefit of Gods ſpecial providences, for protection, direction, ſupplies and aſſiſtance; ſo that the good things of the world (which the men of the world enjoy by common bounty and ordinary providence) true beleevers receive them ſanctified, and Chriſt with them; he conveying them unto them through the covenant of grace. Wherefore, O Chriſtian, take a ſtrict ſurvey of Providences, how when thou waſt bewildred and entangled with variety of troubles, and God hath delivered thee, how when thou livedſt in a place, where were dreadful burnings, and God hath ſnatched thee as a brand out of the burning; and how in a time of peſtilence, when thouſands fell beſides thee, and ten thouſands at thy right hand, God hath given thee thy life for a prey; and in an hard time, when trading decayed, ſupplies were deficient, and not viſibly to be had, then, in that pinching time, God provided for thee, and ſupplied thy wants: make then a catalogue of the merciful providences

Matth. 5. 45. Luk. 6. 36.

ces of God vouchſafed towards thee, keep them written eſpecially in the table-book of thy own heart, and then upon grounded experience, thou wilt infer theſe concluſions, 1. God hath delivered, ſupplied and helped. 2. God is one, and the ſame merciful God, as able, and as willing to help as ever. 3. Hence is to be inferred, that I will caſt my ſelf upon the providence, and be guided by the wiſdom, and wait quietly for the ſalvation of God. 4. That Chriſtian, who is a diligent obſerver of providence, will conclude experimentally with *David*, *Pſal.* 73. 28. *But it is good for me to draw nigh unto God.*

Duty 8. Be much in prayer.

An eighth Duty is to be much in prayer, and frequent addreſs unto the throne of grace. *Samuel* a child of prayer was a child much beloved, and a mercy received in anſwer to prayer is a very welcome and ſeaſonable mercy. The way then to procure this excellent grace of Contentment, is to beg it of God, and to be earneſt ſolicitours for it unto the throne of grace. And although I do not conceive, that at all times one and the ſelf ſame method of prayer is neceſſary, yet it is of great uſe to pour out ſuch a prayer as may conſiſt of theſe three parts,

Confeſſion,

Confession, Petition, and Thanksgiving.

1. Let us confess our sins.

1. For Confession, Let us confess our sins in particular, with their several aggravations, against the Law, and against the Gospel: partly by omitting what the law commandeth, and committing what the law forbiddeth. Let us reflect upon our multiplied provocations, how frequently we have sinned against knowledge and conscience, and against many Sacramental Covenants of better obedience. And what deserve we at the hands of God? and what can we expect for our deserts less then hell and damnation? We deserve not the least crumb of bread which we eat, neither deserve we to breathe in the common air. The serious consideration of our ill deservings and unworthiness should prevail with us to calmness and quietness of spirit: for notwithstanding we suffer very great and heavy afflictions, yet we suffer farr less then we deserve. That we are on this side the grave, and on this side hell, and that we have any thing left to keep us alive in the world (considering our many and manifold provocations) it is Gods great patience to bear with us, and his great and wonderful mercy to let us enjoy even the least of what we have.

2. Let us joyn Petition with Confession.

2. Let us joyn Petition with Confession in

in our prayers, and let one petition amongſt others be, that God would give us a contented and quiet ſpirit. This contented ſpirit comes alone from God, and he alone can perſwade the heart of man to be contented and ſatisfied: God can both ſupply our wants, and when we are ſurrounded with variety of wants, give us a cheerful frame of ſpirit amidſt them all. The Apoſtle was aſſured, *My God ſhall ſupply all your need according to his riches in glory in Chriſt Jeſus.* In the beſt of thoſe things which are under the Sun, there is ſomething lacking; we muſt therefore go to God for ſupply. What is wanting in any creature God is onely able to fill up. All we are and have, comes from God: but that mercy which is given in anſwer to prayer, is to be more valued; for when we can ſay particularly and experimentally, This mercy I ſought of God in prayer, and he hath vouchſafed unto me a gracious anſwer, wherefore I will for ever truſt God, and ſtay upon his gracious promiſes, then do we make a right and ſuitable improvement of mercies. A contented mind is the gift of God: it is worth asking for, and worth having and keeping. O Chriſtian! pray earneſtly for this grace of Contentment, and when thou haſt got it, part not

Πληρώσει πάσαν χρείαν ὑμῶν. Phil. 4. 19.

not with it; but keep it with all care and delight.

3. Thanksgiving. 3. Let us with Confeſſion and Petition joyn Thankſgiving to our prayer: For there is not the leaſt mercy that we enjoy, but we have cauſe to be thankful for it. As for our food and raiment, and our daily preſervation; for our lives, and livelyhoods, even for all that we have, we ought to be thankful. There is not a bit of bread which we eat, nor a ſup of bear which we drink, nor any clothes which we wear, but for them all we ought to acknowledge Gods bounty to us with all thankfulneſs. Gods providence watcheth over us, and all our proviſions, ſupplies and comforts flow from his gracious hand of providence. Now a thankful man both in his lips and heart is exuberant in extolling the name of God, and celebrating his praiſes and ſpeaking good of his name, and telling of his loving kindneſſes all the day long; and ſuch grateful language ſuppreſſeth all murmurings and repinings, and ſettles the ſoul in a holy ſecurity and peace.

Duty 9. Exerciſe ſobriety and temperance. A ninth Duty is to exerciſe ſobriety and temperance, in the uſe of all thoſe things which we enjoy; as in eating, drinking and ſleeping, and in the managing of all the duties of our calling, we muſt be ſober and temperate,

temperate. Sobriety and watchfulneſs are joyned together by the Apoſtle St *Peter*, *Be ſober, be vigilant, becauſe your adverſary the devil as a roaring lion walketh about, ſeeking whom he may devour.* And in that golden chain which the Apoſtle mentions, 2 *Pet.* 1. 6. Temperance is one of thoſe golden links; ſo that a ready way to learn contentment is, to be temperate and moderate in the uſe of any worldly things. Neither muſt we deny our ſelves in unlawful things onely (for that we muſt do at all times) but ſometimes we ought to deny our ſelves in things lawful, by not taking our utmoſt liberty in exacting with rigour our own rights and dues. The charge of the Apoſtle is, *Let your moderation be known unto all men, The Lord is at hand.* If then we labour after ſobriety, temperance and moderation, and have made ſome conſiderable progreſs in thoſe ſtudies, we ſhall be well contented with Gods allowance in the preſent ſtation, wherein God hath been pleaſed to place us in this preſent world. Whence comes diſcontents and vexations, and tumultuous perturbations of ſpirit, but from intemperance and want of moderation? Could men with

1 Pet. 5. 8.

Phil. 4. 5. Τὸ ἐπιεικὲς, i. e. *animus in convictu moderatus, & minimè rigidus, etiam ſui juris exactor.* Beza in loc.

ſobriety

ſobriety and moderation order all their affairs (though they had leſſer eſtates, yet) they would live far more contentedly, then greater perſons, who poſſeſs many thouſand pounds *per annum*.

Duty 10. As one man we ſhould all drive a trade for heaven.

The tenth and laſt Duty (which I ſhall name) is that we ſhould all as one man drive a trade for heaven; that ſo our love, joy, hope, hearts deſire and whole man, and whole converſation may be there. Let us make it our grand buſineſs to mind the great things of eternity. The Apoſtle ſpeaks in his own name, and in the name of all true beleevers, *Phil.* 3. 20. *Our converſation is in heaven.* And he gives an expreſs command, *Col.* 3. 2. *Set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth.* And it is the command of our Saviour, *Matth.* 6. 33. *Seek firſt the kingdom of God, and his righteouſneſs.* Wherefore conſidering, that we have an intereſt in the beſt inheritance, which is the kingdom of heaven, why then ſhould we vex and diſquiet our ſelves for the loſs of earthly things? What matter if we want the ſhallow waters of a ciſtern, as long as we enjoy waters abundantly flowing from the fountain? Chriſt hath made many promiſes to his children, and every promiſe is a debt; heaven will make performance,

formance, and give a full diſcharge of all Chriſts debts and engagements. Heaven will infinitely compenſate and ſatisfie the loſs of all earthly things: for (ſaith the Apoſtle) *I reckon that the ſufferings of this preſent time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that ſhall be revealed in us.* Upon exact computation the Apoſtle found it ſo; or as Doctour of the Chair he thus determined the queſtion. How then comes it to paſs, that we fret and murmure by reaſon of afflictions which are incumbent on us? It is becauſe our hearts are not above, but below: we ſet too high a price on the droſs and dung of the world, and value not the chiefeſt price (as we ought to do) *viz.* the riches of Chriſt. Wherefore we muſt copy out St *Paul's* leſſon and learn it throughly, *Phil.* 3. 8. *Yea doubtleſs, and I count all things but loſs for the excellency of the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt my Lord.* When we can thus ſet a low price on the world, we ſhall learn to ſet a higher price on Jeſus Chriſt. And when our hearts are fixed on heaven where our treaſure is, we ſhall look upon all things under the Sun, as below our cognizance, and too low for

Rom. 8. 18. Λογίζομαι *significat aliquid apud ſe ſubductis rationibus quaſi collectum firmiter ſtatuere, ac proinde non dubiæ opinionis, ſed firmæ perſuaſionis ſignificationem habet.* Gerth.

our affections. Hence then it will abundantly appear, that heavenly-mindedneſs, and a holy converſation will in an eſpecial manner produce contentment and ſettlement in the mind of Chriſtians; and although the things of the world run croſs to us, and all their motions are excentrick, yet the riches of Chriſt, and the conſideration of the high calling in him, the crown of glory, and *the inheritance immortal and undefiled, that fadeth not away, reſerved in heaven for us*, will abundantly content, comfort, and ſatisfie our ſpirits: And thus if we can put thoſe ten Duties forementioned into practice, we ſhall (through Chriſt that ſtrengthneth us) learn the divine art of contentment, and underſtand that excellent myſtery, which St *Paul* learned and commended to our imitation.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Containing an uſe of Conſolation.

Sect. 1.

Shewing Cauſes of Contentment from God, and from our ſelves, as God gives it to us.

I Am now to conclude this Treatiſe with a fifth and laſt Uſe (which I ſhall mention) and that is for abundant conſolation unto all ſuch, who have learned this divine art of Contentment. They reap exceeding great comfort from it, and are fitted for all ſervices, whether they concern corporal or ſpiritual affairs. In all conditions, even as well in adverſity, as in proſperity, they who have learn'd contentment, know how to order all their affairs with diſcretion, and know how to manage them to the beſt advantage. *Uſe* 5. For conſolation.

True beleevers have great cauſe of contentment from God, and from themſelves, as God beſtows it upon them, and from the examples of others.

1. True beleevers have great cause of Contentment (and above all other causes) from God supremely, and this will appear in these ensuing particulars.

1. God is our Father.

1. God is their Father: And this name sounds the neerest relation.

More particularly consider,

1. A merciful Father.

1. He is a merciful, tender-hearted, compassionate Father and full of bowels. Thus his bowels are expres'd, *Isa.* 16. 11. *Wherefore my bowels shall sound like an harp for Moab, and mine inward parts for Kirhareseh.* His bowels yearn towards all his children, and are rolled together: He is the Father of all mercies, and the God of all consolations. God is compared to a tender-hearted Father, *Psal.* 103. 13. *Like as a Father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.*

2. God is a wise Father.

2. As God is a merciful Father, full of bowels and tender-hearted, so he is a wise Father, of infinite wisdom and knowledge. The thoughts of our hearts, and our secretest intentions are known to God: the darkest corners of our hearts are transparent and visible to God: what we have most need of, and what is most fit for us, God knows; and he in wisdom provides for us, and supplies all our wants in his own time, as

as he ſeeth beſt for us. If he give not what we would have, he gives us what is better: for if we had our wills ſatisfied, we ſhould be undone; but Gods will is beſt, and muſt ſtand. Now ſeeing God knows what is better for us, then we know for our ſelves, let us renounce our own wiſdom, and yeeld ready obedience to the wiſe diſpoſing will of God.

3. God is a Father of infinite ability (for he is omnipotent) to help and ſuccour us, he alone is able to extricate us out of all ſtraights, and the moſt preſſing exigencies. Though our troubles are in our thoughts inſuperable, yet God can conquer them all; and though they are multiplied, yet God can deliver us out of them all. That God is infinitely able to help us, is a ſtrong argument to perſwade us to be contented in all conditions. Ofttimes God ſuffers his people to be brought into great exigencies, and into ſuch ſad perplexing troubles, that they know not what to do; then, even then, in that needful time of trouble, God appears for their deliverance; ſo that the glory may redound onely to the name of God; and his right hand alone may have the preeminence, and it may appear to the world, that none leſs then God himſelf, could work out ſuch a

3. God is a Father of infinite ability.

great ſalvation for them. When the people of God are reduced unto the greateſt dangers, and are in their own account moſt ſhiftleſs and helpleſs, then God puts forth his power for their help and ſuccour. *David* experimentally ſpake, *Pſal.* 46. 1. *God is our refuge and ſtrength, a very preſent help in trouble.* And in *Pſal.* 136. 23. upon a ſtrong ground of experience he acknowledgeth Gods wonderful deliverance, ſaying, *Who remembred us in our low eſtate, for his mercy endureth for ever.* Add hereunto Gods gracious promiſe, which was really accompliſhed, *Iſa.* 33. 9, 10. *The earth mourneth, and languiſheth, Lebanon is aſhamed and hewn down; Sharon is like a wilderneſs, Baſhan and Carmel ſhake off their fruits; now will I riſe, ſaith the Lord, now will I be exalted, now will I lift up my ſelf.*

4. God is a Father willing to help.

4. God is a Father willing to help his children; he will deny them nothing that may conduce to his glory, and their good. Sometimes indeed for God to deny a petition, is a great mercy, and a denial is a token of love. A loving Father will not ſuffer his child to take poiſon, neither will he put a ſword into his hands, when he hath not years of diſcretion, leſt he hurt himſelf therewith; no more will God grant all

all that his own children desire, lest the grant of their desires may be hurtful unto them. The Apostle gives a reason why many desires are not granted, *James* 4. 3. *Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your lusts.* The great condition required of us in our prayers is mentioned, 1 *Joh.* 5. 14. *And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.* If ever we expect good success of our prayers, let us ask for matter, manner and end, onely that which is agreeable to the will of God.

And as God is a Father, merciful, wise, able, and willing to help, so consider,

2. God is our Shepherd.

Secondly, God is our Shepherd, and from this relation there ariseth great cause of contentment and consolation, *Psal.* 23. 1. There is a special relation, *The Lord is my Shepherd,* and a special illation, *I shall not want.*

In a shepherd there are observable many and necessary properties.

1. A shepherd knows his sheep.

1. A shepherd knows his sheep, he knows and distinguisheth them, not onely from goats, wolves and such like creatures; but he knows and puts difference by certain marks between his own sheep and other mens sheep; so Christ perfectly knows all his own sheep, *Joh.* 10. 14. *I am the good*

ſhepherd, and know my ſheep, and am known of mine. There is a mutual knowledge of and acquaintance with Chriſt and his ſheep; He knows them, and they know him.

2. A ſhepherd calls his ſheep.

2. Another property of a ſhepherd is to call his ſheep. A ſhepherd by a whiſtle calls his ſheep; ſo Chriſt calls his ſheep, by the voice of the miniſtery of his word, and by the motions of his Spirit, and by the whiſpers of conſcience; and Chriſts ſheep hearken to his *call*, *Joh.* 10. 27. *My ſheep hear my voice.*

3. A ſhepherd feeds his ſheep.

3. A ſhepherd feeds his ſheep. A good ſhepherd carries his ſheep into good paſtures, and in froſt and ſnow he feeds them: ſo God is the good Shepherd, who makes proviſion for his people. There is a grand promiſe, *Ezek.* 34. 13, 14. *And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countreys, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Iſrael by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the countrey. And I will feed them in a good paſture, and upon the high mountains of Iſrael ſhall their fold be; there ſhall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat paſture ſhall they feed upon the mountain of Iſrael.*

4. A ſhepherd watcheth over his flock.

4. A ſhepherd watcheth over his flock. Sheep have many enemies, as wolves, dogs, foxes, *&c.* *Jacob* watched day and night over

over *Labans* ſheep: ſo God watcheth over his children. He is the keeper of Iſrael, and a moſt watchfull keeper. *Pſal.* 121. 4. *Behold, he that keepeth Iſrael, ſhall neither ſlumber nor ſleep.* A ſhepherd watcheth againſt enemies: he hath his fold to keep his ſheep in the night, and both day and night, a Shepherd is vigilant; he hath his ſtaff to defend them, ſtill his eye is watchfull over them, leſt they ſhould go aſtray, and their enemies meet with them and devour them; how watchfull was *David* in reſcuing his ſheep out of the mouth of the Lion, and the paw of the Bear. Above all others, God is watchfull, he is the moſt vigilant Shepherd to defend and protect his ſheep. God promiſeth, *Zech.* 2. 5. *I will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midſt of her.* And *Jer.* 31. 10. *Hear the word of the Lord O ye nations, and declare it in the iſles afar off, and ſay, he that ſcattered Iſrael will gather and keep him, as a ſhepherd doth his flock.*

5. A ſhepherd rules, guides and directs his ſheep whither to go. The ſelf-ſame word ποιμαίνειν ſignifieth both to rule and to feed; of all creatures, ſheep are moſt apt to go aſtray; The ſhepherds vigilant

5. A ſhepherd rules and guides his ſheep.

eye

eye is over them, he takes notice which way they go; he calls them with his whistle, sends his dogs for them, and he leads them the way, shewing them where they should feed: so the great Shepherd of our souls calls us home to him, by his word, and sometimes by afflictions he calls upon us to come unto him. Afflictions are like a shepherds dog, which brings home straying sheep unto the shepherd. And this great Shepherd of our souls leads us into that way, where he would have us go, *Psal.* 23. 2. *He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters.* If then we seriously consider the efficacy of this relation, that God is our Shepherd, we should be engaged to a contented frame of spirit.

3 God is our Master.

3. Consider God is our Master, and we are his family, now a master provides for his family, and instructs his family, and governs his family.

1. A master provides for his family.

1. A master provides for his family, those of his household, are so many *deposita* committed to his charge, and it is the obliged duty of the master, to make provision for them of his household, 1 *Tim.* 5. 8. *But if any provide not for his own, and specially those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse then an infidel.* Now then if masters

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on earth take care of, and make provision for their families; how much more care doth the great Master of all the world take, in making supplies and provisions for them all? All the cattel on a thousand mountains are at his command: as absolute Sovereign Lord of all, he sends supplies, and makes provision for all.

2. A master instructeth and teacheth his family. It is a grand and necessary duty incumbent upon all masters of families to instruct all under their roof in the knowledge and service of God: for performing this duty, God highly commended *Abraham*, *Gen.* 18. 19. *For I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgement; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham, that which he hath spoken of him.* It was the resolution of *Joshua* (c. 24. v. 15.) *but as for me, and my house, we will serve the Lord.* And *David* stands upon record for a pattern of imitation, *Psal.* 101. 2. *I will walk* (saith he) *within my house with a perfect heart.* And what purging work he resolved to set upon in his family, is evident, v. 3, 4, 5. This Psalm Bishop *Ridley* frequently expounded to his family, and press'd upon them their duties accordingly. Let us then thus inferr, if earthly

2. A master instructeth and teacheth his family.

earthly maſters (as duty binds them) inſtruct their families; much more doth God inſtruct his great family. Other inſtructers and maſters of families may err, and teach their families wrong, (becauſe men are fallible and ſubject to errour) but God is the great Maſter and Inſtructer of his family, and cannot err; for he is altogether infallible. Gods teaching is an unerring and infallible way of teaching. He not onely teacheth his ſcholars, but can make his ſcholars learn and profit by his teaching. God promiſeth his Spirit, *Ezek.* 36. 27. *And I will put my Spirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in my ſtatutes, and ye ſhall keep my commandments and do them. Gods children have eye-ſalve from Chriſt,* and an *unction from the holy One.* Rev. 3. 18. 1 Joh. 2. 20.

3. A maſter rules and governs his family.

3. A maſter rules and governs his family. A maſter of a family is bound to command all under his roof, to live in the fear of God. In an eſpecial manner, a maſter ſhould regard the obſervation of the ſabbath, by himſelf and his whole houſhold, *Exod.* 20. 10. *Thou ſhalt not do any work, thou, nor thy ſon, nor thy daughter; thy manſervant, nor thy maid-ſervant, nor thy cattel, nor thy ſtranger that is within thy gates.* A maſter of a family, muſt not ſuffer refractory

fractory and incorrigible perſons to live with him; ſuch as will not ſerve God, he muſt not continue in his ſervice. He that is a maſter of a family hath a great price put into his hands, to do a great deal of good; he muſt diſcountenance, and puniſh ſins and wickedneſs, and he muſt encourage the practice of religion, and encourage the power of godlineſs. Now doth a maſter on earth rule carefully and faithfully in his family, how much more doth the great Maſter of the whole world rule and govern all his houſhold? Other rulers and maſters have dominion onely over the bodies of men; but the great Maſter of heaven and earth is the Lord and Ruler over all the conſciences of men. This Sovereign Lord and Maſter preſcribes laws, and not onely commands obedience, but makes his ſubjects willing to yeeld obedience. But as for ſuch as are rebellious, and will neither bend, nor bow to his ſcepter, he breaks them to pieces, *Pſal. 2. 9. Thou ſhalt break them with a rod of iron, thou ſhalt daſh them in pieces, like a potters veſſel.* There is no oppoſing of Chriſts government; for who ever rebelled againſt him and proſpered? If then we profeſs our ſelves Chriſts ſervants, let us yeeld cheerful obedience to him, as our Sovereign

Lord

Lord and Master. And having interest in such a Master, we have greatest reason to be contented servants.

4. Consider God is our Husband.

A fourth consideration why we should have cause of contentment from God is this, because God is our *Husband*, so he calls himself, *Jer.* 31. 32. And when a people revolted from God, he would no longer be their Husband, *Hos.* 2. 2. It is took for granted (for so it ought to be) that husbands should abound in love, and be tender-hearted, and provide for their wives, and concern themselves in their wives concernments. O! how superabundantly doth this love evidence it self in God! for he loves his people, and takes care of them, and provides for them. There is an union between Christ and his Church, and this is a great mystery, *Eph.* 5. 32. And the love of husbands to their wives, should be like the love of Christ to his Church, which is a tender, sincere, undivided and constant love; and farther, this love is a mutual and reciprocal love, *Cant.* 2. 16. Love must be returned for love, though our love to Christ is but like a drop to the ocean, or a sand to the balance, when we compare it with Christs love to us. Hence then will be raised a ground of satisfaction, and singular contentment unto the Church of God,

God, for Chriſt is the Bridegroom, the Church is his Spouſe. God accounts himſelf an Husband to his people, therefore he engageth himſelf to take care of them, *Jer.* 3. 14, 15. *Turn O backſliding children (ſaith the Lord) for I am married unto you: and I will take you, one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion, and I will give you paſtours according to mine heart, which ſhall feed you with knowledge and underſtanding.* Thus you have ſeen what cauſes there are of contentment from God.

Sect. 2.

Shewing cauſes of Contentment from our ſelves, and from the example of others.

Sect. 2. Shewing cauſes of content-ment from our ſelves.

IN the next place, and to conclude this Treatiſe; I ſhall repreſent unto you ſeveral cauſes of contentment from our ſelves.

Though theſe cauſes are wrought within us, yet they are wrought without us and above us, by the omnipotent power of God. They are our acts, but Gods gifts, and he crowns his own gifts in us. Not to mention many cauſes that might be named, I ſhall onely inſiſt on two cauſes, as ſpecial grounds of contentment, *viz.* peace of conſcience, and a right government of the affections.

1. Peace

1. Peace of conscience is a cause of contentment.

1. Peace of conscience is a strong ground of contentment and consolation. It is a remarkable saying of *Aquinas*, *melior est pura conscientia, quàm plenum marsupium.* A man from himself (as Gods gift) can receive satisfaction, according to that of *Solomon*, *Prov.* 14. 14. *A good man shall be satisfied from himself.*

Quasi dicat fore, ut quisquam à se actorum fructum percipiat, constare cuique suarum actionum mercedem; sæpe etiam in hac vita, sed certissimè in altera. Merc. in loc.

Now none by his own power and wisdom can satisfie and quiet his own spirit; but when the conscience is pacified, and God is reconciled to a soul, there is an inward soul-satisfying consolation: compare this with *Isa.* 3. 10. *Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings.* In all our troubles and afflictions, and amidst slanders and calumnies heap'd upon us, what can comfort us, but the answer of a good conscience? This is *cause of rejoycing*, that our conscience testifies for us. Amidst storms and tempests, Euroclydons, and tossings and tumblings, a God reconciled will bear up our spirits against all; *Tranquillus Deus tranquillat omnia.* But because many pretend to conscience, who are meer strangers to conscience, and quiet themselves with a false peace, and content themselves with

2 Cor. 1. 12.

with a carnal ſecurity, I will make mention of thoſe diſtinguiſhing characters, which St *Bernard* mentions, *Bona eſt conſcientia, ſi habeat in corde puritatem, in ore veritatem, in actione rectitudinem.* What is that which ſweetens the moſt bitter pill of afflictions, but the teſtimony of a good conſcience? And what is that which imbitters all the pleaſures in the world, but an evil conſcience? One grain of an evil conſcience intermixt amongſt the grandeur and affluence of riches of the great ones of the world, will prove like that wild gourd which ſpoiled the whole meſs of pottage. *Luther* hath a rare ſaying to this purpoſe, *Una guttula malæ conſcientiæ totum mare mundani gaudii abſorbet.* If then you would enjoy true and ſolid mirth, and an abiding contentment, labour to keep this *Fort-royal* impregnable, I mean, the bulwark of a good conſcience. This was the Apoſtles grand exerciſe, *to keep a conſcience void of offence toward God and toward men*, *Acts* 24. 16. Faith and a good conſcience are to be united, 1 *Tim.* 1. 19. *Holding faith and a good conſcience.* If we unite them and hold them faſt together, we conſult our own peace and tranquillity, but if we divide them, we lay our ſelves naked to the aſſaults of Satan, the temptations of the world, and the

Bern. de inter. domo, cap. 27.

Hic murus aheneus eſto, Nil conſcire ſibi, nullâ pallescere culpâ.

prevalency of our own corruptions.

2. The right government of the affections is a cauſe of contentment.

2. Another cauſe of contentment from our ſelves, is the right government of the affections: when affections are rightly regulated and bounded, they adminiſter great contentment and conſolation. The affections are frequently to be compared to the ſwelling and boiſterous waves of the ſeas, which keeps neither bounds, nor banks, but cauſe an inundation. The affections are uſually inordinate, extravagant, impetuous and diſorderly, and they ſet the whole man in a tumult: The perturbations and diſorders of the affections ſets all in a hurly-burly of confuſion. But when (through the grace of God) the affections are ſet upon the right object, and diſpoſed in a right order, then there ariſeth a wonderful calm and ſerenity upon the ſpirit. When the love, joy, hope and deſire are weaned from the world, and fixed upon heavenly things, then the heart is quieted and abundantly ſatisfied. But the diſorder and diviſions of the affections cauſeth great diſcontent, for when the heart hankers partly after earth, and partly after heaven, there can be no ſolid contentment and acquieſcence amidſt ſuch diviſions and diſtractions: But when all thoſe affections, love, joy, hope and deſire make God the *Centrum quietativum*, then all is right, for then the

the heart is comforted, and the conſcience pacified, and the whole man ſet in a right frame and temper.

A third cauſe of contentment is from the examples of others: This is *cauſa exemplaris*. The examples of others may in an eſpecial manner (when God ſets them home) prevail with us to contentment.

3. There is cauſe & encouragement for contentment from the examples of others.

Now we are to have a double aſpect upon examples, partly ſuch as are above us, and partly ſuch as are below us.

1. As for ſuch as are above us, we may upon enquiry find many great and noble Perſonages contented with a ſmall pittance of this world: For inſtance: of *Moſes* it is recorded, *Heb.* 11. 24. *By faith, Moſes when he was come to years, or* (as the Original is) *when he became a great man, refuſed to be called the ſon of Pharaohs daughter. Moſes* was ſo eminent in *Pharaoh*'s Court, as to be accounted the adopted ſon of *Pharaoh*'s daughter. *Joſephus* an Hiſtorian of good note, relates this ſtory, that *Thermuſis Pharaoh*'s daughter was the onely child of *Pharaoh*, and he had no ſon to inherit the kingdom, and that this his daughter had no child; wherefore after ſhe had found *Moſes* at the rivers ſide, ſhe kept him hid for ſo long a time, as it might be ſuppoſed to be her own child, to the intent and purpoſe that he might inherit her fathers

1. Let us look upon examples above us.

Μέγας γενόμενος. *Magna fides quæ principatus ſpernit, & contemptis ſe aggregat.* Grot. Joſeph. l. 2. c. 5.

crown. This history may be questionable, but the Text evidently sets forth *Moses* his self-denial, and contentedness of spirit, *Heb.* 11. 26. *Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches then the treasures of Egypt.* I may add farther the contentedness and self-denial of those worthies, of *whom the world was not worthy; They wandred about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy: They wandred in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.* Thus these holy men were contented with their mean & contemptible condition in the world, so they might obtain interest in a better life. I question not, but they might have worn better apparel, then *goat-skins & sheep-skins*, and have lived in better houses then in dens and caves, if they had complied with those times wherein they lived. *Galeacius Caraccioius* left his Marquesdom of *Vico*, and all his relations, and contented himself to live in a retired private way at *Geneva*: for he would not relinquish his Religion for the honours of the world, but he resolved to hold fast the profession of his faith without wavering. And he thunders out a dreadful anathema against such, who make the wrong choice, in these words, *Curſed be the man, who prefers all the gold and silver in the world, before one days communion with Jesus*

Heb. 11. 37, 38.

See the life of *Galeacius Caraccioius*.

Jesus Christ. To this example, I will add that of *Hermisdas*, recorded by *Theodoret.* This *Hermisdas* was a Noble-man of *Persia*, and because he would not deny Christ, he was degraded from his dignity, stript of his clothes, and compelled to wear rags and keep camels. He was well contented with this mean condition, and when afterwards the King of *Persia* sent for him, and clothed him with silken clothes, and perswaded him to deny Christ, he presently tore his silken clothes in pieces, saying, *If for these you think to have me deny my faith, take them again.* Whereupon he was with scorn cast out. Had this great man been willing to deny Christ, he might have kept his temporal dignities and riches; but he preferred Christ before all honours, and he was rather contented to be a slave to the King of *Persia*, and keep his camels, then deny Christ for the greatest preferments. Theod. lib. 5. 131.

2. And as we must reflect upon examples above us, for our imitation; so we must reflect upon examples below us, and learn from them, this excellent lesson of Contentment. From the poorest we may learn this lesson. Such as have no more then what they work for, and can onely reserve something to keep them alive on the sabbath day, for which they have wrought in hard labour all the six days in the week; these, I say, eat, drink and sleep, 2. Let us look upon examples below us.

ſleep, with a great deal of contentment. They are contented with courſe bread, ſmall drink, and ſometimes water, and with a hard bed of ſtraw, and yet they eat and drink heartily and ſleep quietly, and they and their children look fat and well-liking. They have not thoſe cares, fears and vexations upon their ſpirits, as thoſe have, who have thouſands of gold and ſilver. With ſuch as theſe, we ſhould compare our ſelves, and if ſo little a portion content them, why ſhould not much more content us?

For a cloſe of this Treatiſe, let us be exhorted (and O! that the Exhortation might take good effect) to account God our portion, riches, treaſure, and all in all, and having him, who alone can quiet, content and ſatisfie our ſouls, we ſhall be abundantly quieted, contented and ſatisfied. I ſhall conclude all with *Pſal.* 4, 6, 7, 8. *There be many that ſay, Who will ſhew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou haſt put gladneſs in my heart, more then in the time that their corn and their wine increaſed. I will lay me down in peace, and ſleep: for thou Lord onely makeſt me dwell in ſafety.*

FINIS.